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EDITOR'S LETTER

By now gardeners are itching to get into the garden – time spent planning and contemplating over winter can finally be put into action. April is a joyous month with its vibrant greens and fresh-faced flowers. Tulips are among those plants key to a spring garden and their continued appeal is evident in the gardens we feature this issue, in particular the tulip-filled garden of Polly Nicholson, a lover of rare breeder and broken tulips. Polly's Wiltshire garden contains not one but three walled gardens and she has collaborated with designer Arne Maynard to transform these into a fabulous family garden that also serves as a base for her artisan flower-growing and floristry business.

For Dutch bulb breeder Jan Ligthard it is the variety in shape and colour that he loves about tulips and that spurs him on to breed new and unusual cultivars. It takes years to bring a new cultivar to market but that hardly seems to matter given the Netherlands' long history with the bulb – it's just part of the long and continuing heritage.

We take a look at our own gardening heritage too, celebrating the life of Rosemary Verey, who was born 100 years ago this year. She came to gardening in her forties and transformed the garden at Barnsley House in the Cotswolds into one of the most influential in the country. Along with her writing, she showed how basic principles of design and planting, borrowed from sometimes larger gardens and estates, could be made to work in a smaller, more intimate space.

From past heritage to urgent environmental issues. The shocking images of plastic-filled oceans on BBC One's *Blue Planet II* have probably made many of us take a long, hard look at our use of plastic and try to find ways of reducing that use. In this issue gardener Alys Fowler looks at how as gardeners we can tackle the problem. The figures for contamination are sobering, so doing what we can really does matter. And that includes us as a magazine too. If you have your magazine delivered, you'll know that it comes in a plastic bag. We realise that the use of single-use plastic is an issue and, along with other members of the magazine publishing industry, are actively looking for alternatives. Extensive work needs to be done to assess the validity of each option and to be certain that they will protect our magazines in the postal system.

We currently keep the weight of our mailing polythene as low as possible and have deliberately chosen a recyclable material. Unfortunately, most local authorities don't currently provide kerbside collections for polythene, but it can be recycled at some supermarkets.

We hope to work to a better solution soon,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

JASON INGRAM

Rare breeder and broken tulips are a passion for flower grower Polly Nicholson, page 36.

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JASON INGRAM

Discover the key elements of design in a Rosemary Verey garden, page 50

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Blackland House by Jason Ingram

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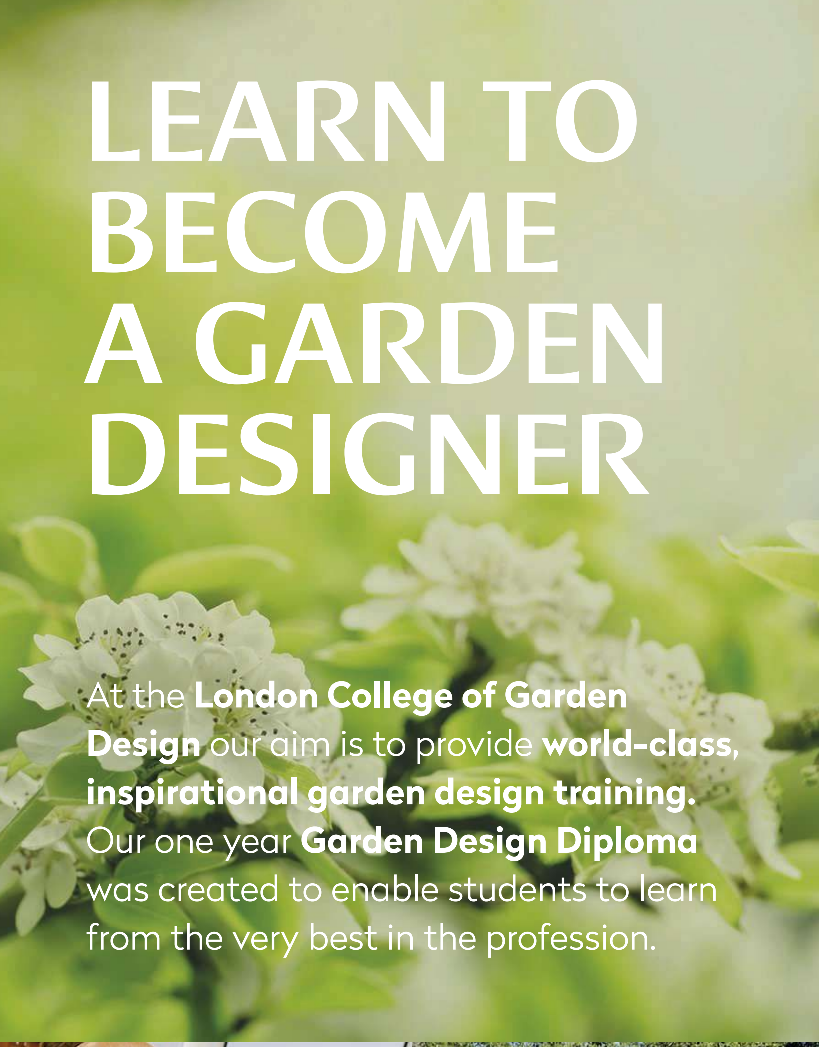
- Join us on a tour of the finest lakeside gardens around Lakes Como and Maggiore and a visit to the Orticolario garden show – page 8
- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition, see page 32
- Treat yourself to an overnight stay at Barnsley House and enjoy a guided tour of its Rosemary Verey-designed gardens – page 113



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CAT LANE

JANE PERRONE
Jane visited Polly Nicholson who runs Bayntun Flowers from her Wiltshire garden, page 36. *"Polly's enthusiasm for cut flowers is infectious and it was a privilege to visit her wonderful garden."*

JIM GARDINER
Jim has selected the best yellow-flowered magnolias on page 58. *"Magnolias provide so much value for gardens of all sizes with the yellows providing an added palette of colours."*

JONATHAN CHERRY

ALYS FOWLER
Alys has been looking at ways to limit the use of plastic in the garden, page 82. *"Like elsewhere in our lives, plastic has crept into our gardens and it's time we start to challenge that."*

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JAMES BASSON
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

FERGUS GARRETT
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student and volunteer programmes at Dixter and through worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008.

ANNA PAVORD
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

DAN PEARSON
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show at Chelsea in 2015.

SARAH PRICE
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and was named 2016 Garden Columnist of the year by the GMG for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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GARDENS OF THE ITALIAN LAKES

Travel by boat to visit some of the finest lakeside gardens of Lakes Como and Maggiore, plus visit the Orticolario garden show in the company of designer Annie Guilfoyle

TOUR LEADER

Annie Guilfoyle is an award-winning designer and lover of all things Italian. She combines a successful garden design consultancy with lecturing, writing and judging internationally.

Our journey to the Italian Lakes will take us to some of the finest lakeside and island gardens of this uniquely beautiful region. We will travel mostly by boat, discovering landscapes of quiet enchantment and sublime grandeur. While our days will be infused with exquisite light, by night we will revel in the *fin de siècle* atmosphere of our lakeside hotels. The warm, humid microclimate results in exceptional growing conditions, with much to enthuse the plantsman. Combining great botanical interest with the fascinating history of the gardens' origins, our tour will move from the Renaissance to the 20th century through compelling and often neglected chapters of Italian garden history with visits including the baroque splendours of **Isola Bella** and **Villa del Balbianello**, perched atop a small, wooded peninsula, and the historic gardens of **Villa Carlotta**. The tour culminates at **Orticolario**, an unusual, small garden festival near Como. We will stay at two lovely lakeside hotels offering a perfect combination of elegance and charm: Hotel Villa Flori overlooking Lake Como, and the Grand Hotel Des Iles Borromees on the shores of Lake Maggiore.

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The price per person, based on two people sharing is £2,999 (a single supplement of £400 is levied by the hotels).

Price includes: two nights dinner, bed and breakfast at *Grand Hotel Des Iles Borromees*, Lake Maggiore and two nights dinner, bed and breakfast at *Hotel Villa Flori*, Lake Como; four evening meals with wines; plus two lunches and return flights London to Milan. The price does not include extras at either hotel, or travel insurance.

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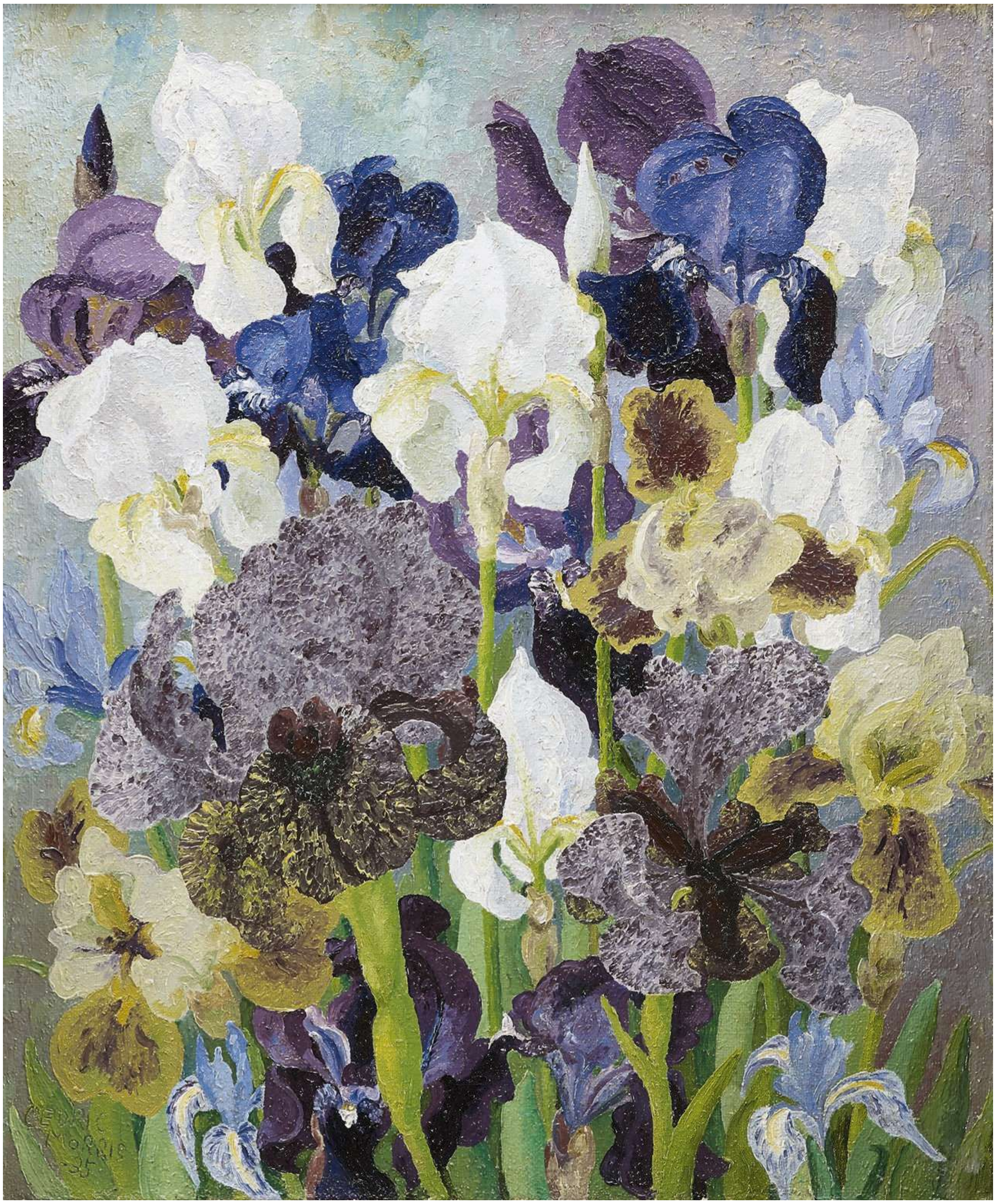
DIG IN

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month



MAY FLOWERING *IRISES NO. 2*, 1935, SIR CEDRIC MORRIS OIL ON CANVAS © PHILIP MOULD & COMPANY. COURTESY THE CEDRIC MORRIS ESTATE

NATURAL BEAUTY

For many gardeners Cedric Morris is as well-known for the irises he raised in his Suffolk garden, Benton End, as he is for his paintings. This month the Garden Museum brings together these two passions in a new exhibition, *Cedric Morris: Artist Plantsman*. Most of the 34 paintings included are of flowers, many from private collections that have never been shown in public before. To accompany the exhibition, designer Dan Pearson has put together a display of Cedric Morris irises recently popularised at the 2015 Chelsea Flower Show. 18 April – 22 July. **gardenmuseum.org.uk**

News

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LIE OF THE LAND

From its inception the Hauser & Wirth gallery in Bruton has succeeded in attracting bold and thought-provoking modern art to rural Somerset. Now with its latest exhibition *The Land We Live In – The Land We Left Behind*, the gallery is putting rural life itself in the spotlight. Mixing historic artefacts and paintings from the likes of William Holman Hunt with works from contemporary artists, such as Turner-prize nominee Laure Prouvost – not to mention grazing goats and the chance to learn how to milk one or try your hand at cheese making – the exhibition explores our evolving connection to the land. Until 7 May, **hauserwirthsomerset.com**

BOWLED OVER

Belgian-born artist Aude Van Ryn is an extremely busy woman. When she's not working as a freelance illustrator or creating quirky sculptures inspired by her travels, she spends her time making decorative ceramic tableware, including bowls, pots, jugs and mugs, all hand-decorated with delicate images of leaves, flowers, birds and geometric shapes. And the results are utterly charming. Prices start at £55 from ***thenewcraftsmen.com***

SUMMER FRILLS

Introduce some romance to late summer borders with this new hibiscus bred by Roderick Woods in Norfolk. *Hibiscus syriacus* Magenta Chiffon (= 'Rwoods5') has densely doubled, reddish-pink flowers made up of broad, delicately veined petals that become smaller as they get closer towards the centre, creating a frill effect. Plant out now in humus-rich soil, in a sunny position and flowers will appear from August. Available in a three-litre pot for £18.99 from rhsplants.co.uk

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Christian Lacroix WILLIAM YEOWARD
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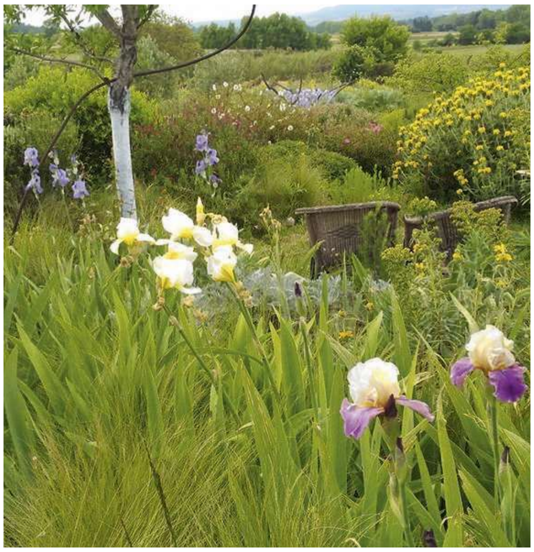
EN VACANCES

If you're planning a spring break in France, one of the best ways to discover some of the country's most beautiful and lesser-known gardens is to join the Jardins Ouverts scheme. Annual membership costs just €10 and entitles you to visit any of the gardens on open days throughout the year. Last year 150 gardens took part, successfully raising €23,500 for French charities, such as A Chacun Son Everest, which organises activities for children recovering from cancer. Among the gardens opening this year is Le Jardin des Rossignols (below) in the Languedoc-Roussillon region of southern France. Owner Catriona McLean has evolved the garden slowly over the past six years in a wild, prairie style, and in April it is filled with irises and other naturalised spring-flowering bulbs. Open 7-8 April, 2.30-6pm. For more details visit **opengardens.eu**



FASHIONABLY FLORAL

As a new exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum shows, the relationship between fashion and the natural world is a complex one. *Fashioned from Nature* traces the history of floral fashion from 1600 to the present day, while also exploring how fashion's constant demand for raw materials is damaging the environment. Alongside fabrics that draw on the beauty of nature, such as the delicately embroidered Victorian silk train, above, are innovative fabrics, including a leather substitute made using grape waste from the wine industry. 21 April 2018 – 27 January 2019. **vam.ac.uk**

SILK TRAIN (DETAIL), WOVEN WITH A PATTERN OF ROSES, C.1890S VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON; CATRIONA McLEAN

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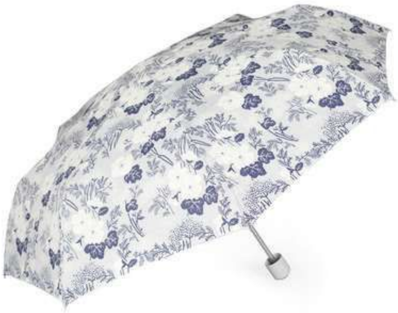

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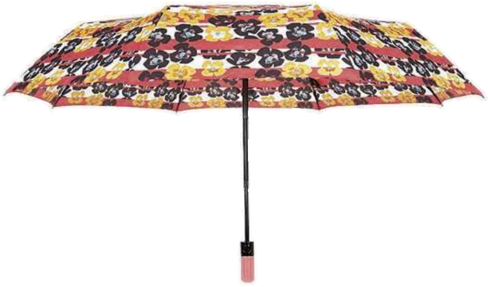

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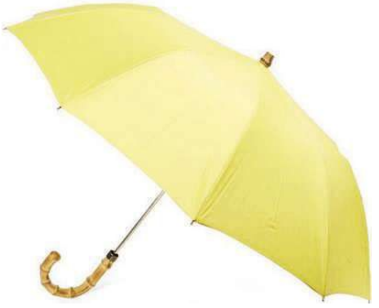

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❶ London College of Garden Design Bursaries
Don't miss the chance to apply for one of two 10th anniversary bursaries for the London College of Garden Design. The bursaries, which will be awarded on the basis of financial need and academic merit, are available for the Garden Design Diploma, starting in September 2018, and the Planting Design Diploma, starting in January 2019. The closing date for applications is 6 April. Tel 01483 762955, lcgd.org.uk

❷ The Fife Spring Trail
Discover 12 private gardens in Fife, including The Murrel in Aberdour, featured in Gertrude Jekyll's *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, opening for the first time in aid of Scotland's Garden Scheme. Various dates from 10 April – 23 May. £25. Tel 0131 226 3714, scotlandsgardens.org

❸ Spring *Kokedama* Workshop
Learn how to create three different types of *kokedama* – the Japanese craze for growing plants in a moss ball – using seasonal plants and bulbs. 17 April, 11am-1pm. £55. Petersham Nurseries, Church Lane, off Petersham Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7AB. Tel 020 8940 5230, petershamnurseries.com

❹ Spring Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair
Find stylish antiques for the garden, such as planters, urns, troughs, gates and benches, at this spring fair. 17-22 April. £10. Battersea Park, London SW8 4NW. Tel 020 7616 9327, decorativefair.com

❺ Creating a Mediterranean Garden
Pick up tips on how to create your own Mediterranean-style garden on a guided tour of the dry garden at RHS Hyde Hall with garden team member Christine Woodhouses. 19 April, 10am-1pm. £29. RHS Hyde Hall, Creephedge Lane, Rettendon Common, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8ET. Tel 020 3176 5830, rhs.org.uk

❻ Rookwood Garden Fair
Browse more than 60 stalls offering garden products, gifts and plants from 15 specialist nurseries at this garden fair organised to raise funds for a local community hospital. 19 April, 10am-4pm. £7. Rookwood Farmhouse, Stockcross, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8JX. rookwoodgardenfair.co.uk

❼ Designing Family Gardens
Make the most of your outdoor space on this one-day course with designer Dawn Isaac, with advice on hard and soft landscaping materials and design techniques. 24 April, 10am-4pm. £65. Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 336265, botanic.cam.ac.uk

❽ Cotswold Spring Tour
Enjoy three different Cotswold gardens on this one-day tour. Starting at Througham Court, with its wildflower meadow, the tour moves to the more formal gardens at Owlpen Manor, before ending with a visit to Pan Global Plants nursery. 25 April, 10.30am-5.30pm. £100. Tel 0117 317 9874, gardendaysout.com

❾ Godinton House Plant Fair
Explore the gardens of Godinton House and browse the stalls at its spring fair, offering a range of unusual plants. 29 April, 11am-4.30pm. £5. Godinton House and Garden, Godinton Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 3BP. Tel 01233 643854, godintonhouse.co.uk

❿ Lake District Tour with Jimi Blake
Book now for a four-day tour with plantsman Jimi Blake of some of the most spectacular gardens in and around the Lake District, including Holker Hall & Gardens, Levens Hall, Lowther Castle and Gresgarth Hall, the private garden of designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd. 22-25 May. £400. Tel +353 (0)87 645 3042, huntingbrook.com

⓫ Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture
Discover new artists working in garden sculpture in this four-month exhibition at Architectural Plants nursery. Showcasing the work of artists at The Garden Gallery, including Charlotte Mayer and Adam Buick, and Architectural Plants' resident artist David Klein. Until 14 July, 9am-5pm. Architectural Plants, Stane Street, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1DJ. Tel 01798 879213, architecturalplants.com

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10. JIMI BLAKE BY BERNARD VAN GIESSEN; 11. *LUNA* BY CHARLOTTE MAYER

Horse Chestnut Bench

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THE ALNWICK GARDEN

In bloom

Celebrate the arrival of spring with a visit to The Alnwick Garden's one-of-a-kind Cherry Orchard

There's no time like spring for enjoying outdoor strolls and admiring stunning gardens. Hanami, which translates as 'flower viewing', is a long-standing Japanese tradition of welcoming spring, and is also referred to as the 'cherry blossom festival'. The annual celebration is about appreciating the temporal beauty of nature – and it's a sight to behold.

Within The Alnwick Garden, a stunning contemporary garden created by the Duchess of Northumberland, lies The Cherry Orchard. Planted in 2008, it is one of the largest cherry orchards in the world to feature the 'Tai-haku' tree, also known as the great white Japanese cherry. The 'Tai-haku' was originally introduced to England in 1900, and was rediscovered years later – after it had died out in Japan – by plant collector Captain Collingwood Ingram in a Sussex garden. He was instrumental in the reintroduction of the tree to Japan, and all of the 'Tai-haku' trees across the world are descended from the cuttings he made.

This large and sturdy tree grows huge snow-like clusters of flowers in April and early May, at the same time as its coppery leaves begin to appear. There are 329 of them in The Cherry Orchard and each one has been sponsored by a visitor to the garden. The entire orchard has been underplanted with 'Purple Sensation' alliums and is bordered by *Rhododendron luteum* in white, yellow and orange.

The serpentine path that loops its way through The Cherry Orchard is designed to be accessible to all, including wheelchair users, and leads a gentle walk through this unique area. The Alnwick Garden is also home to one of the world's largest wooden treehouses, where you can enjoy food and drink in a setting like no other.

KEY FACTS

- ✿ 329 'Tai-haku' cherry trees
- ✿ Grown in a Dutch nursery for five years
- ✿ Five-year-old 'Tai-haku' grafted onto seven-year-old wild cherry stems

Win a special visit to The Alnwick Garden! The prize includes:

- ✿ A tour of The Alnwick Garden by Head Gardener Trevor Jones
- ✿ Two nights' accommodation at the Hogs Head Hotel
- ✿ A cream tea in the Pavilion Cafe
- ✿ An evening meal in The Treehouse Restaurant worth up to £150

The winner and four runners up will also receive a copy of *The Making of The Alnwick Garden.*

To enter the competition and for T&Cs please go to www.gardensillustrated.com

To find out more, and watch the cherry blossom live on webcam as it grows from bud to bloom, visit *www.alnwickgarden.com*

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for a balcony or small garden

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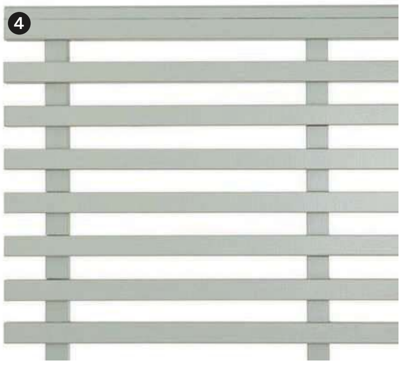

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MAIN IMAGE (THIS PAGE AND OVERLEAF) BY STEVE SAYERS

1. Ferm Living Bau Pot, small, in warm grey, (180 x 240mm), £34, 0330 123 3301, cloudberryliving.co.uk **2. Fatboy Stripesol Parasol in industrial green,** £349.95, 0333 363 0330, houseology.com **3. Kew Gardens Razorsharp Topiary Shears,** £20.99, 03456 049049, johnlewis.com **4. Garden Screening Panel in brendon green,** (1,853 x 650mm, 25mm gap), £95, 08454 969649, trellisdirect.co.uk **5. Victorian Tall Wall Greenhouse,** £389.99, 0333 003 0026, forestgarden.co.uk **6. Pyramid Flower Bed in cream,** (450 x 600 x 600mm), £89, 0844 414 2885, aplaceforeverything.co.uk **7. Green Basics Watering Can, 10L in living black,** £14.99, elho.com

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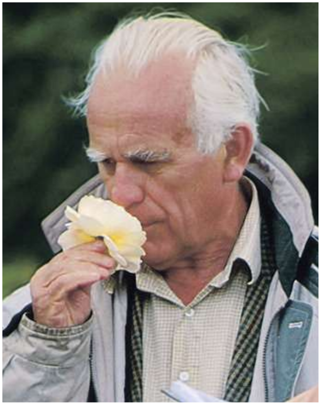
1. Micro Greenhouse, small (210 x 230 x 160mm), £34.95, large (275 x 310 x 210mm), £49.95, 0333 240 0155, nkuku.com **2. Trellis kit for Potted Plants,** £37, 0800 096 0938, manufactum.co.uk **3. Green Basics Balcony Pot Holder Allin1,** £7.95, elho.com **4. The Allotment Store,** from £1,245, 01544 387101, theposhshedcompany.co.uk **5. Copper Watering Can,** £49.99, 0121 420 2494, haws.co.uk **6. Atik mini-rake,** £48, 024 7639 2497, implementations.co.uk **7. Crinkle Pot,** from £9, 01993 82311, henandhammock.co.uk

Harlow Carr (*Aushouse*)



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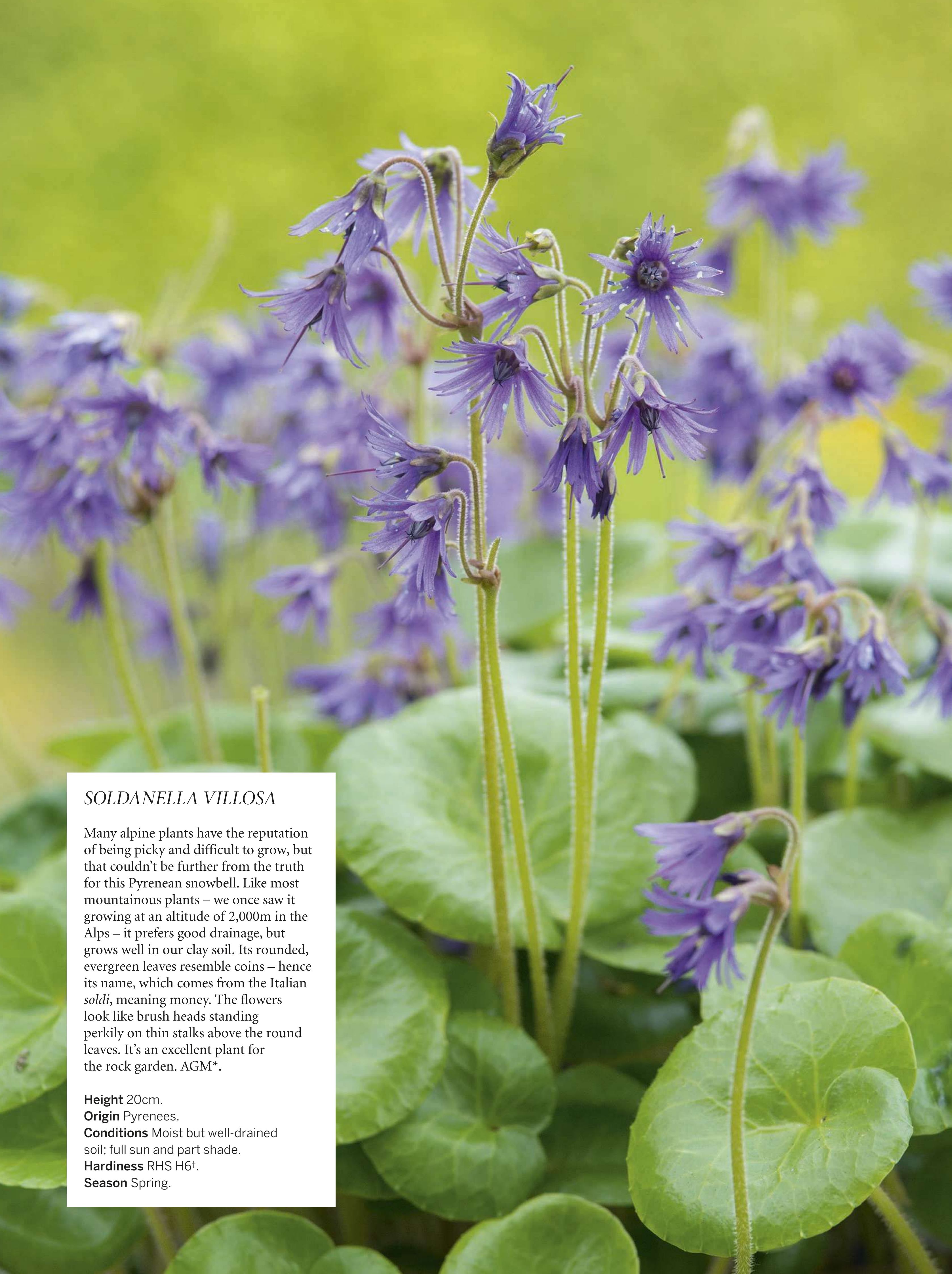


SOLDANELLA VILLOSA

Many alpine plants have the reputation of being picky and difficult to grow, but that couldn't be further from the truth for this Pyrenean snowbell. Like most mountainous plants – we once saw it growing at an altitude of 2,000m in the Alps – it prefers good drainage, but grows well in our clay soil. Its rounded, evergreen leaves resemble coins – hence its name, which comes from the Italian *soldi*, meaning money. The flowers look like brush heads standing perkily on thin stalks above the round leaves. It's an excellent plant for the rock garden. AGM*.

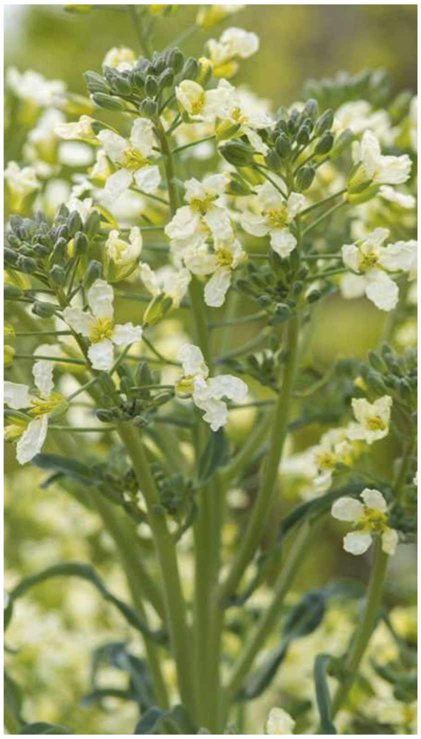
Height 20cm.
Origin Pyrenees.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun and part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6[†].
Season Spring.

APRIL PLANTS

As the days lengthen and the soil warms, Fleur finds pleasure in delicate shade lovers as well as a surprisingly zingy cowslip and a broccoli that looks as good as it tastes

WORDS **FLEUR VAN ZONNEVELD** PHOTOGRAPHS **MAAYKE DE RIDDER**

Fleur van Zonneveld
runs the Dutch nursery
De Kleine Plantage.
dekleineplantage.nl



BRASSICA OLERACEA ITALICA GROUP

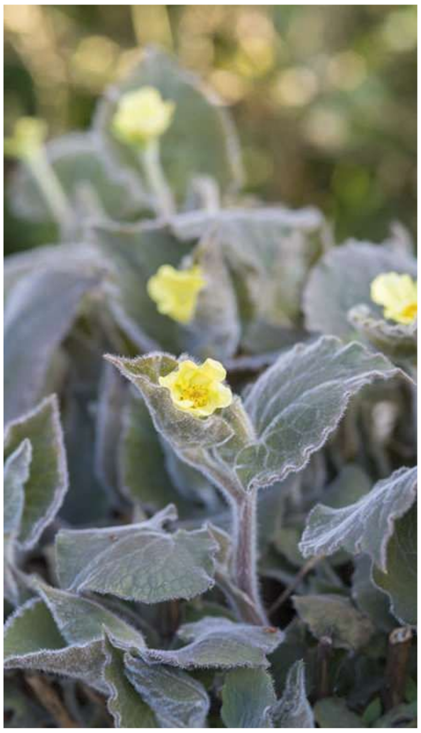
Sometimes sold as Friarielli or Spigariello broccoli, this rapini or broccolini is highly prized in Italy for its flavour. But it's such a beautiful plant it deserves to find a home beyond the vegetable garden. In the spring its creamy flowers rise above silver-grey leaves that are deeply cut and twisted into a spiral shape. Both flowers and leaves are delicious when lightly fried or eaten raw in a salad, and you can eat the leaves and the flower buds at the same time. Just as hardy as a Cavolo Nero, it can be harvested in winter. It's also a great plant for insects.

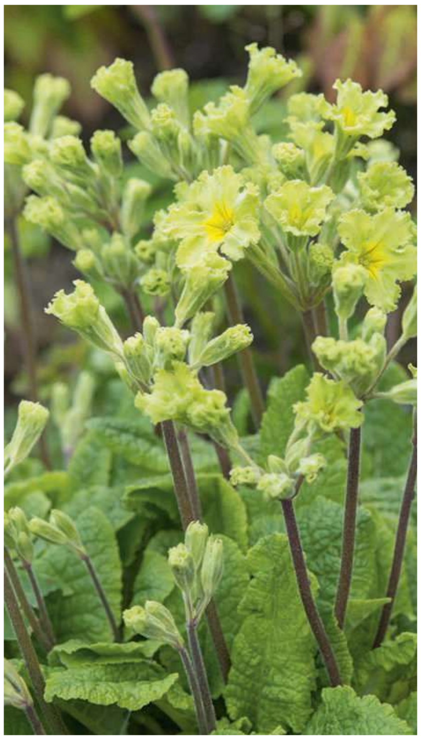
Height 60cm.
Origin Italy.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 2a-11.
Season of interest Spring – winter.

SARUMA HENRYI

What a miraculous plant. The first flowers appear almost at the same time as the bronze-purple leaves push their way above ground. The plant grows steadily to about 70cm, with new flowers – like little yellow flags on grey, mice-like ears – appearing as it grows. It flowers April to June and again sporadically throughout summer, when the velvety leaves become a bit dull. A perfect plant not only for shade, but also for pots, it works well next to more pronounced plants, such as *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' or *Actaea simplex* 'Brunette'. The name *Saruma* is an anagram of its close relative *Asarum*.

Height 70cm.
Origin China.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.
Season April to autumn.





PRIMULA 'FRANCESCA'

This lovely form of *Primula* x *polyantha* was discovered on a roundabout in the US state of Oregon. It starts flowering in April and lasts up until July, bearing ruffled, apple-green flowers with a pale-yellow eye that, unlike most bi-coloured primulas, suit a natural planting scheme. Its slightly backward-bending petals look a little odd, but are interesting nonetheless. It's also disease resistant, requires little maintenance and is attractive to bees and butterflies. Beautiful when planted in combination with a blue *Corydalis elata*. AGM.

Height 30cm.
Origin USA.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season April – June.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

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Garden Masterclasses

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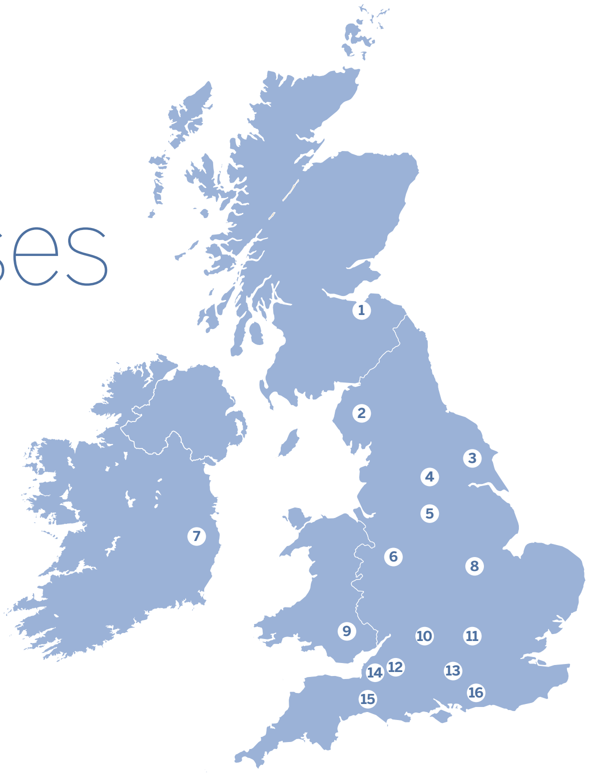

Garden Masterclasses aim to bring together gardeners and designers with some of the most innovative people in the gardening world through one-day workshops. Each workshop is organised around a specific topic, and designed to help students learn and practise. With quality catering, in garden or nursery venues, we hope that students will have a good day out too, meeting other passionate gardeners, and sharing experiences.

ANNIE GUILFOYLE AND NOËL KINGSBURY, MASTERCLASS ORGANISERS

2018 workshop dates and venues: *unless noted all days run from 10am-4.30pm*

- WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL £130
Walled Garden Treberfydd, Powys (9).
Planting design basics with Sarah Price & Noel Kingsbury.
- WEDNESDAY 2 MAY £130
Easton Walled Gardens, Lincolnshire (8).
What makes a successful garden? with Annie Guilfoyle & Ursula Cholmeley.
- SATURDAY 12 MAY (10.30AM-5PM) £140
Forde Abbey, Dorset (15).
Garden Masterclass Spring Event with Anna Pavord, Keith Wiley & Harriet Rycroft.
- TUESDAY 15 MAY £140
The Coach House Garden, Gloucestershire (10).
Secrets of successful summer containers with Harriet Rycroft.
- MONDAY 4 JUNE £140
Parham House and Gardens, West Sussex (16).
Parham House through the lens – a photography workshop with Jason Ingram.
- WEDNESDAY 6 JUNE £140
Yeo Valley Organic Garden, Somerset (14).
The immersive experience, planting design at the human scale with Dr. Nigel Dunnett.
- WEDNESDAY 13 JUNE £140
Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire (6).
Dynamic Planting at Trentham with Dr. Nigel Dunnett.
- MONDAY 9 JULY £140
Bury Court, Hampshire (13).
Generative planting design for the 21st century with James and Helen Basson.
- THURSDAY 19 JULY £125
Scampston Walled Garden, North Yorkshire (3).
Using grasses and perennials in the modern garden with Neil Lucas.
- WEDNESDAY 25 JULY £140
Waterperry Gardens, Oxfordshire (11).
Gardens through the lens – a photography workshop with Jason Ingram.
- MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER £130
Parham House and Gardens, West Sussex (16).
Creating and developing a late summer border with Tom Brown & Marina Christopher.
- TUESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER £140
Arvensis Perennials, Wiltshire (12).
A collaborative approach to design and planting with Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg.
- THURSDAY 13 SEPTEMBER £110
Walled Garden Treberfydd, Powys (9).
Pruning – a beginner's guide with Mary Payne.
- TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER £130
The Coach House Garden, Gloucestershire (10).
The rabbit's eye view – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury.
- THURSDAY 20 SEPTEMBER £90
Stillingfleet Lodge Gardens, Yorkshire (4).
The rabbit's eye view – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury.
- SATURDAY 22 SEPTEMBER £90
Sheffield Botanical Gardens, South Yorkshire (5).
The rabbit's eye view – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury.
- WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER £130
Fairnielaw House, East Lothian (1).
Plants First with Sarah Price.
- WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER £130
Hunting Brook Gardens, Co. Wicklow, Eire (7).
Understanding plants – choosing and using for long-term impact with Jimi Blake & Noel Kingsbury.
- TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER £140
Parham House and Gardens, West Sussex (16).
Lightroom and post production for garden and plant photographers with Jason Ingram.
- FRIDAY 19 OCTOBER (10.30AM-5PM) £140
Forde Abbey, Dorset (15).
Garden Masterclass Autumn Event with Rosy Hardy, Derry Watkins and Sarah Price.
- WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER £130
Larch Cottage Gardens, Cumbria (2).
What makes a successful garden? with Annie Guilfoyle.
- WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER £140
Yeo Valley Organic Gardens, Somerset (14).
Lightroom and post production for garden and plant photographers with Jason Ingram.

For booking and details of all workshops go to
gardenmasterclass.org
or email gardenmasterclass@gmail.com

Workshops with James and Helen Basson, Jimi Blake, Tom Brown, Hugo Bugg & Charlotte Harris, Ursula Cholmeley, Marina Christopher, Dr. Nigel Dunnett, Annie Guilfoyle, Rosy Hardy, Jason Ingram, Dr Noel Kingsbury, Neil Lucas, Rob Macdougall, Anna Pavord, Mary Payne, Sarah Price, Harriet Rycroft, Derry Watkins and Keith Wiley.

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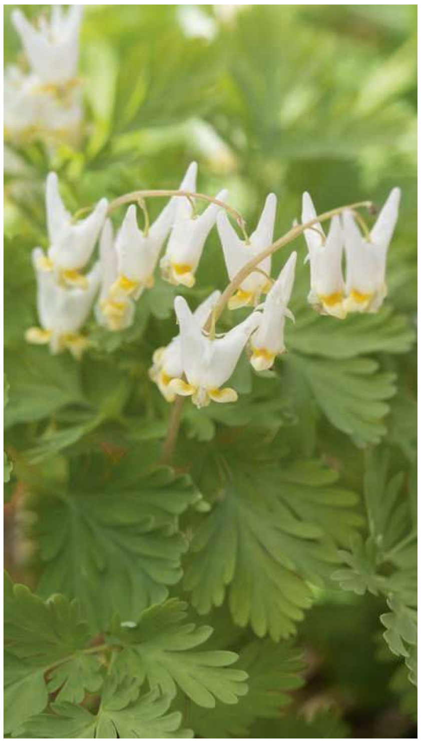
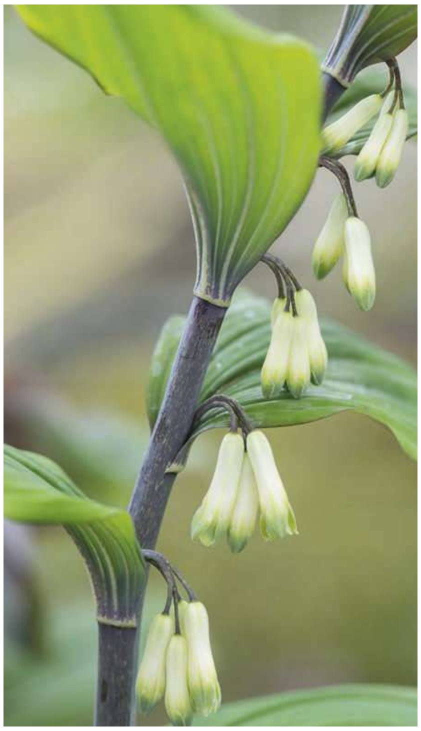
URSULA CHOLMELEY PORTRAIT BY FRED CHOLMELEY

DICENTRA CUCULLARIA

This North American plant has several common names, but perhaps the best known is Dutchman's breeches, which alludes to its white flowers that look like the puff pants once worn by fishermen in the Dutch village of Volendam. Like *Dicentra canadensis*, which it also resembles, it is summer dormant and its fern-like, grey-green leaves disappear after flowering. But it blooms earlier than *D. canadensis* and has bulblets that look like pink shrimps, while those of *D. canadensis* look like kernels of corn, giving that plant its common name of squirrel corn.

Height 20cm.
Origin North America.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b.
Season Spring.





POLYGONATUM X *HYBRIDUM* 'BETBERG'

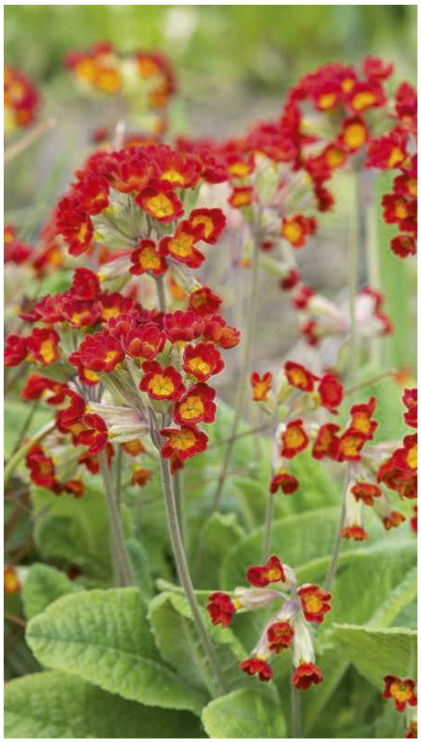
There are several species and cultivars of *Polygonatum* – all suitable for natural plantings in shady conditions – but this is our favourite. It has spectacular purple, almost-black, shiny new shoots that rise in spring with amazing power and virility, although it doesn't grow as fast as the straight species. The flowers hang from the stem in long lines – giving it its Dutch common name of sow with piglets – and in autumn these turn to poisonous, purple-black berries. Unfortunately, like all polygonatums it is loved by snails and sawfly larva.

Height 70cm.
Origin Northern hemisphere.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season Spring – autumn.

PRIMULA VERIS 'SUNSET SHADES'

This hybrid strain of cowslip is always a welcome sight in spring when it lights up a shady corner. It's so unexpectedly vibrant that it creates a real frisson of excitement when it appears. Its flowers, which smell like heaven, are in shades of red, orange and yellow and they last for ages. The species is native to parts of Europe (although not the Netherlands), so it naturalises well. The flower stem is covered in a white powder that says: don't touch me! So we just leave the plant alone and admire its beauty. Sometimes it gives a short, second flowering in autumn.

Height 20cm.
Origin Europe, Asia.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season Spring.

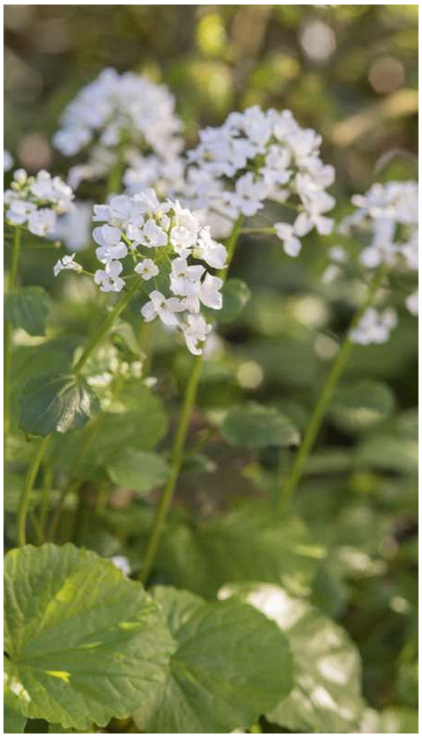


PLACES TO VISIT

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best both in Europe and the UK

For many, the name **Keukenhof** is synonymous with tulip displays. But the name of this large park outside Amsterdam actually means kitchen garden, and dates back to the 15th century, when Countess Jacoba van Beieren [Jacqueline of Bavaria] used the grounds as a source of fruit and vegetables for her nearby hunting lodge. Today, Keukenhof is the international showcase for the Dutch floricultural sector, with a special emphasis on flower bulbs, including, of course, tulips. For eight weeks each spring the park opens to the public with an impressive display of around seven million bulbs. At one time these displays could be a little pedestrian with large blocks of tulips, but since the park employed the bulb expert Jacqueline van der Kloet in 2005 to design planting schemes that combined bulbs with perennials and annuals, such as violets and forget-me-nots, the displays have been transformed, and her influence is still much in evidence. 22 March – 13 May 2018, 8am-7.30pm. Stationsweg 166a, 2161AM Lisse, the Netherlands. keukenhof.nl/en/

Freilichtmuseum am Kiekeberg is an open-air, agricultural museum near Hamburg in Germany. Every April it hosts a large plant market that attracts specialist plant growers, such as Gärtnerei Teske, Michael Camphausen and Epimedium.info, from all over Europe. There's a lot of interest in shade- ▷



PACHYPHRAGMA MACROPHYLLUM

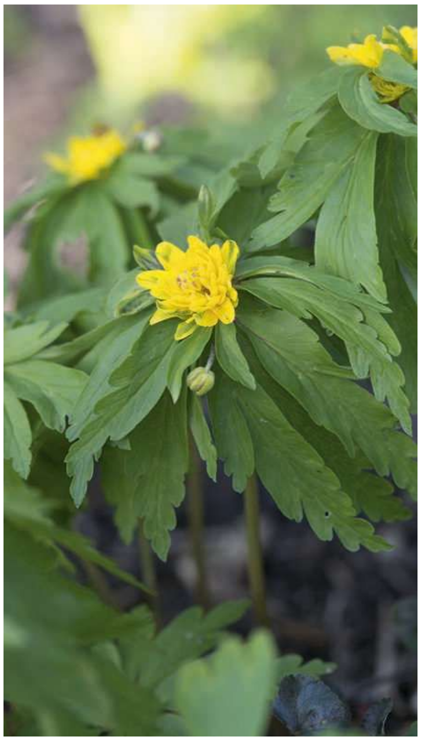
Insects and butterflies adore this plant, as seemingly do many gardeners, because suddenly everybody is asking us about it. Its popularity is in part down to the rave reviews it's received from growers and gardening magazines. Praise that, in our opinion, is entirely justified. Its long-flowering, toothwort-like, white flowers, held above rounded, fresh-green foliage, are a beautiful sight, and it forms highly attractive almost-evergreen groundcover for shady areas. And if that wasn't enough it also has a delightful scent. We adore it too.

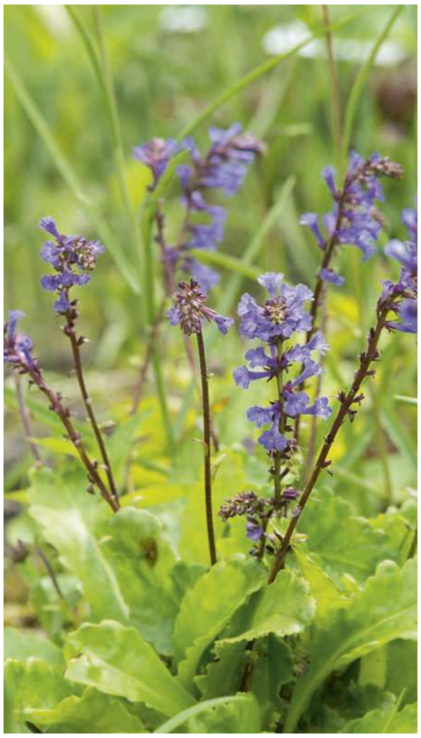
Height 40cm.
Origin Caucasus, Turkey.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part to full shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season Spring – summer.

ANEMONE RANUNCULOIDES 'CRAZY VIENNA'

An anemone discovered in a castle park in Vienna that has been cultivated by the Austrian anemone specialist Christian Kress. Kress along with the Estonian Taavi Tuulik is introducing some exciting new cultivars. This one has bright-yellow, double flowers that look like buttercups and last until late in the season. It makes an excellent groundcover plant that works especially well when used between higher and later-flowering, shade-loving plants, such as *Maianthemum racemosum* or *Polygonatum* x *hybridum*.

Height 20cm.
Origin Vienna.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season Spring.





WULFENIA X SCHWARZII

The most striking feature of this plant is its young rosettes that develop at the base of the old flower spikes and look almost as though the plant is presenting its new plants to you on a plate. It's a good evergreen plant for well-drained soil, with leathery leaves and dense, curved spikes of small, tubular, blue flowers that face in the same direction. It was discovered by the East German botanist Wilhelm Schacht and first cultivated in the East German town of Jena by a Professor Schwarz, after whom it is named. I find it the best wulfenia for the garden, but it needs protection from severe frost.

Height 30cm.
Origin Southeast Europe.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun and part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season Spring – summer.

▷ loving perennials in Germany at the moment, so expect to find exciting new *Anemone nemerosa* cultivars, as well as hepaticas, podophyllums and disporums. The range of plants on offer is always impressive and the setting among the museum's old, half-timbered buildings is romantically beautiful. 14-15 April 2018, Am Kiekeberg 1, 21224 Rosengarten-Ehestorf, Germany. Tel +49 (0)40 7901760, kiekeberg-museum.de

You don't need to travel to the Netherlands to see brilliant tulip displays. **Pashley Manor Gardens** on the Sussex-Kent borders puts on a spectacular display in April of more than 40,000 tulips in an array of colours from classic creams to red-hot oranges and lipstick pinks. The gardens themselves are lovely, and in late April you can also enjoy the very beautiful bluebell walk. 24 April – 8 May, 10am-5pm. Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, nr Wadhurst, East Sussex TN5 7HE. Tel 01580 200888, pashleymanorgardens.com

Many gardens in Europe and the UK come into their own in spring, but this is especially true of **Belsay Hall** in Northumberland with its Quarry Garden. Created by Sir Charles Monck in the early 19th century, the Quarry garden has a distinctive microclimate that makes it a haven for rare, exotic plants you wouldn't normally expect to find in a garden this far north. Elsewhere in the gardens you'll find deep-blue *Chionodoxa sardensis*, pale-blue *Puschkinia scilloides* and buttery-yellow daffodils. The meadow garden, surrounded by magnolias, is also worth exploring with its collection of unusual bulbs, oxlips, cowslips, wild orchids, camassias and several species of lily. Belsay, nr Morpeth, Northumberland NE20 0DX. Tel 0370 333 1181, english-heritage.org.uk

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The Outsider

Craggy and desolate, the Mani is the central and most dramatic of three peninsulas in the Peloponnese region of southern Greece – a home to rare tulips, painted and wild

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** ILLUSTRATIONS **ALICE PATTULLO**

The main road narrows to a bumpy lane as you head along the coast from Kalamata towards the southernmost point of mainland Europe. I wanted to complete a loop that would draw me into the spectacular desolate, landscapes of deep Mani then continue up the eastern side of the peninsula and into the snow-capped peaks and deep gorges of the majestic Taygetos Mountains before returning through the Langada gorge, home to *Thalictrum orientale*, with a pass at 1,300m. I hoped to find wild tulips. I had read that *Tulipa goulimyi* and *T. orphanidea* grew in a few locations on the Mani Peninsula. To my delight I got lucky, and found the rare crimson *T. goulimyi* on my second day in the hills.

When to go

The peak for the lowlands is from late March to late April, but the season in the mountains above 1,000m extends into July. Even if you visit in autumn it's colourful, with cyclamen, crocuses, colchicums and the glossy, yellow flowers of *Sternbergia lutea*.

Where to go

Driving south I marvelled at the abundance of technicolour vegetation spilling on to the shabby asphalt. To great excitement I stopped twice for tortoises to shimmy across my path. Kastania was a highlight of the outer Mani, I was too early in the season to find lunch but wine and a delicious snack appeared from a house on the village square. Cobbled, ancient mule tracks (*kalderini*) snaked out of the village and on to the mountain. Here in shady spots were vigorous colonies of *Cyclamen rhodium* subsp. *peloponnesiacum*, *Anemone blanda* and the scallop-leaved *Saxifraga rotundifolia* subsp. *chrysosplenifolia* offering its starry white flowers up for admiration. Nearby I found blue, courtesy of the pretty endemic *Scilla messeniaca*, and the occasional *Iris unguicularis* peeping out of the grass. *Orchis italica*, scarlet *Anemone coronaria* and yellow bee orchids also thrived in the sun. Here too the generous, lilac flowers of *Campanula andrewsii* sprawled over smooth limestone boulders and caught my eye as we walked through the prickly phrygana (spiny vegetation that thrives here).

The stony old olive groves are not heavily cultivated, and are full of flowers. Tongue orchids: the larger, darker *Serapias vomeracea* subsp. *orientalis* and its pale little sister *Serapias lingua*, magenta soapwort, *Saponaria calabrica*, *Vicia melanops* and *Cerinthe retorta* abound.

On the eastern aspect, the village of Anavryti (920m) has a wonderful café serving mountain tea (*Sideritis syriaca*), which you need to soothe your nerves after the hair-raising ascent. From here there are many trails to follow. In three hours I reached the ancient Byzantine settlement of Mystras, an open archaeological site on the slopes of Mount Taygetos. I found many botanical treasures en route, and, among the ruins, protection from grazing promotes yet more floral diversity. Here I stumbled on a tiny, half-ruined room, a few fragments of fresco persisted on the otherwise rough stone wall. Painted flowers, among them a slender tulip, the ancient red pigment faded to a deep ox-blood black.

Plant to grow at home

Observation of any plant growing in its native habitat brings a greater understanding of how to grow it well, and what to plant next to it. *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii* is popular in cultivation, and has been since its introduction during the reign of Elizabeth I. Valued for its architectural form, great stature and long season of interest, it is often confused with the other subspecies of *E. characias*. This has a more compact habit and modest, dark-centered flowerheads; so it is good to note that the two are found in different areas of the Mediterranean: subsp. *characias* in the western region and subsp. *wulfenii* in the east. This wonderful evergreen spurge is a perennial with biennial flower stems. You cut them back to the base just after flowering in early summer, making space for new stems that quickly extend with the promise of dramatic chartreuse flower whorls the following spring. It is generally hardy, but requires free-draining soil and is appreciative of both space and sun. In the Mani, vibrant *Euphorbia* flowers were plentiful but it looked most remarkable growing with just two companions; a wispy grass and drifts of scarlet *Anemone coronaria*. The red peacock anemone, *A. pavonina*, also grows here (the two are almost identical but this one has undivided stem leaves and narrower, more numerous petals). To get the same effect grow clumps of the flame anemone, *A.* x *fulgens*, which is slightly taller and more likely to thrive in a damp climate, and gives a fiery shot of spring colour.

Guides and maps

Mani: Travels in the Southern Peloponnese by Patrick Leigh Fermor (1958). Not really a travel guide, but a superlative companion to the region, its people, places and rich history – and the inspiration for my trip.
Southern Peloponnese Walks and Car Tours by Michael Cullen (Sunflower Books, 2014).
Flowers of Greece and the Balkans: A Field Guide by Oleg Polunin (Oxford Paperbacks, 1987).

You can also find up-to-date information on hiking routes, public transport timetables and events at **insidemani.gr**

Where to stay

Traditional Hotel Itilo
Neo Itilo, Anatoliki Mani 230 62, Greece.
Tel +30 27330 59222, hotelitilo.gr
A boutique hotel with private terraces, pedigree goats and wonderful hosts.
Taleton Sparti Country Hotel
Xirokambi 230 54, Greece.
Tel +30 2731 035150, taleton.gr
Eco boutique hotel, set in the foothills of Mount Taygetos. With easy access to many walking routes.

MANI
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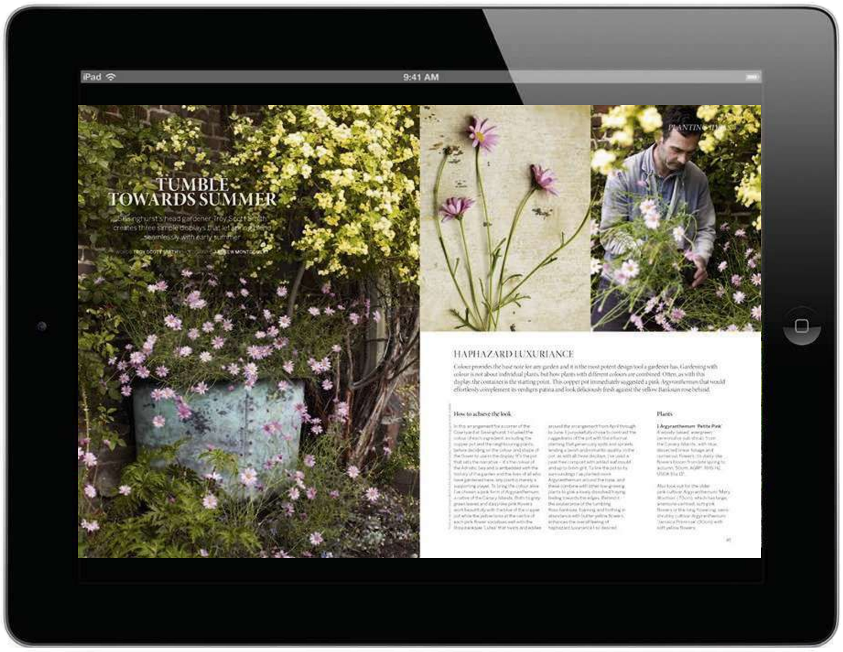
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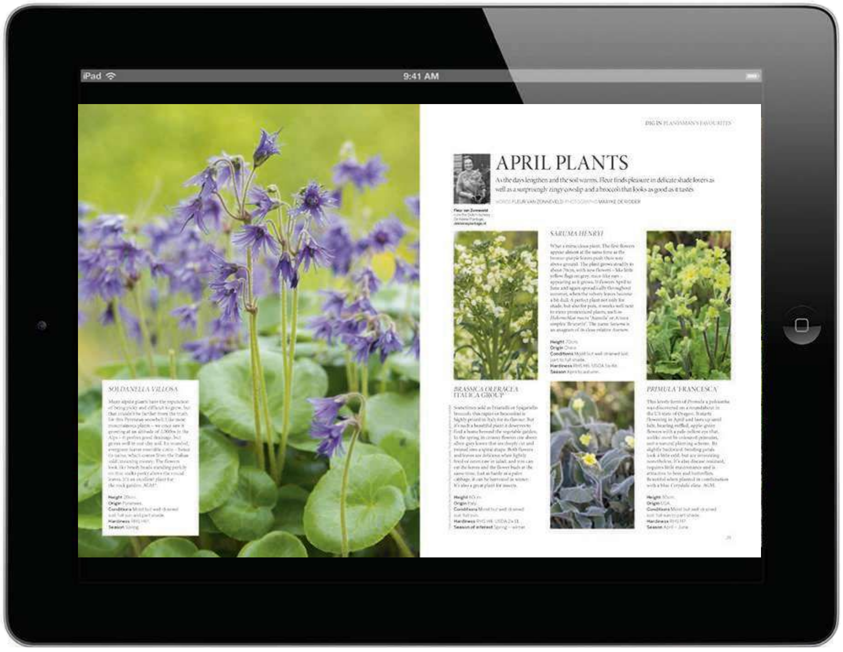
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GARDENING TALENT

Andy Darragh

Andy is in charge of the gardens at the National Trust's Fenton House, where his love of the dramatic, and of bright and bold colours is transforming the property's herbaceous borders

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden memory Having grown up in a council flat with no green space, I longed for the summer holidays when we would visit my grandparents. They had a large 1950s-style garden that I used to relish helping out in. Edging was always a favourite job.

First plant love I used to love the bright colours of bedding plants: the bolder, the brighter, the more flamboyant the better. Nothing has really changed; I still love flamboyant design and colour. My palette has since moved away from gaudy bedding plants but I still see no barriers when it comes to me redesigning a border, as you'll see from the bright colours in our borders here at Fenton House.

Favourite landscape I love water, romance, drama and a little fun in a garden. Villa d'Este near Rome has all these attributes; I love the romantic setting, the grottos, the massive fountains and water cascading down the terraces, creating a heaven away from the heat, which makes you feel like you're in a dream.

Most valuable training Learning all the basic, practical horticultural skills at Kew that started me off on my career path and spring-boarded my passion into a profession.

Favourite planting style I love the style that we garden here at Fenton House: relaxed old English style. There is something about a walled garden with the magic of discovering the space inside the walls. I love the way this garden allows a creativity using flowering plants rather than dramatic landscaping.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today Many back gardens have simply become an extension of the house's interior. I worry that this has created a disconnect. I like the idea of a garden as a creative green space that you can constantly keep working and creating, making a personal patch of idyllic green heaven – rather than what can be seen in an interior magazine or on a TV show.

Plant not to be without A garden is not a garden in my opinion without a rambling or climbing rose. I know they might be traditional and perhaps old fashioned but they are so beautiful and the scents are incredible. The next question should be which cultivar, which would be impossible for me to answer to be honest. I would be hoarding like crazy to include as many as possible.

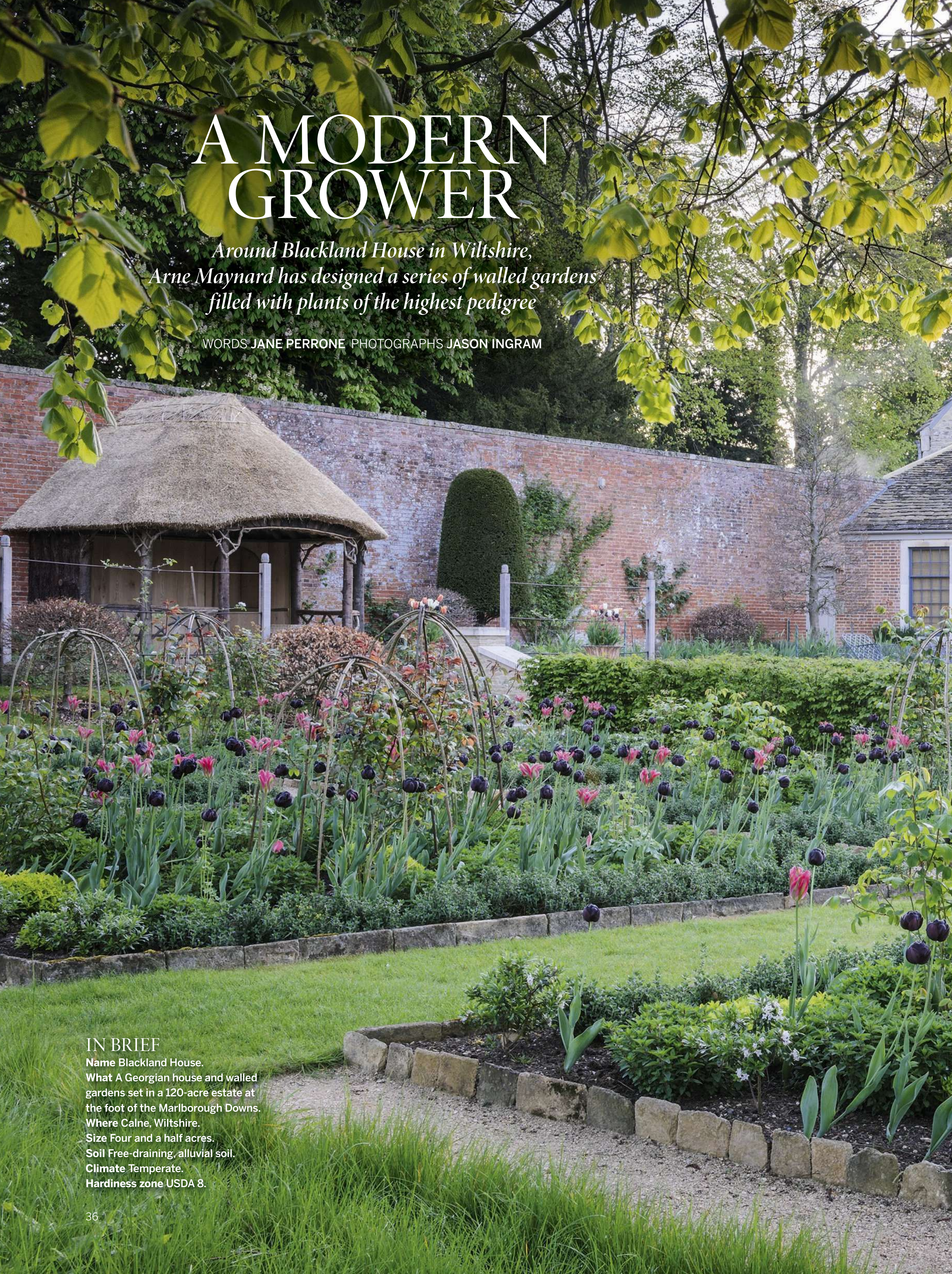
Contact fentonhouse@nationaltrust.org.uk
Fenton House, Hampstead Grove, Hampstead, London NW3 6SP.
nationaltrust.org.uk

MANY THANKS TO NATOINAL TRUST FENTON HOUSE WHERE THIS PORTRAIT WAS TAKEN

A MODERN GROWER

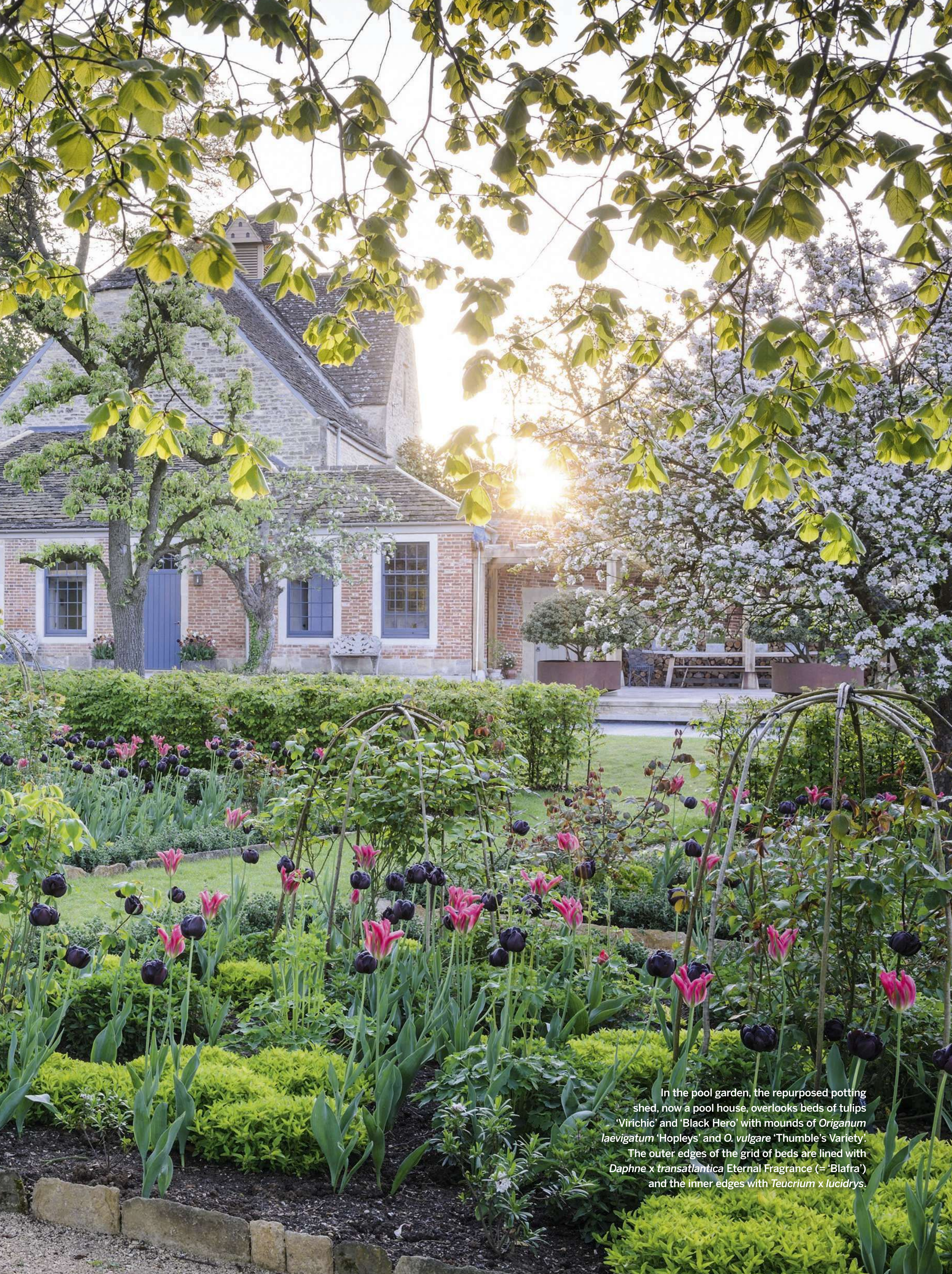
Around Blackland House in Wiltshire, Arne Maynard has designed a series of walled gardens filled with plants of the highest pedigree

WORDS **JANE PERRONE** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

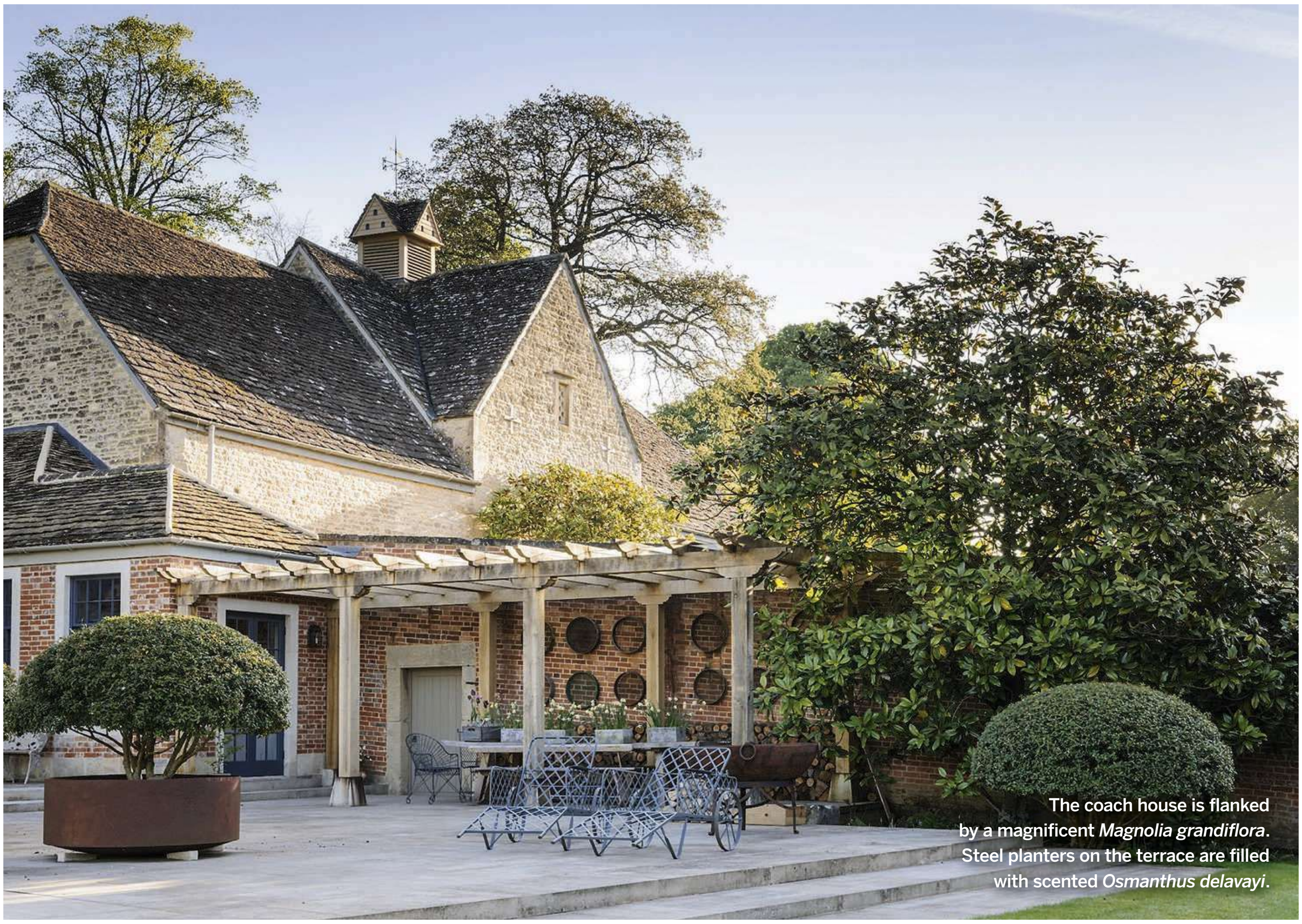


IN BRIEF

Name Blackland House.
What A Georgian house and walled gardens set in a 120-acre estate at the foot of the Marlborough Downs.
Where Calne, Wiltshire.
Size Four and a half acres.
Soil Free-draining, alluvial soil.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.



In the pool garden, the repurposed potting shed, now a pool house, overlooks beds of tulips 'Virichic' and 'Black Hero' with mounds of *Origanum laevigatum* 'Hopleys' and *O. vulgare* 'Thumble's Variety'. The outer edges of the grid of beds are lined with *Daphne* x *transatlantica* Eternal Fragrance (= 'Blafra') and the inner edges with *Teucrium* x *lucidrys*.



The coach house is flanked by a magnificent *Magnolia grandiflora*. Steel planters on the terrace are filled with scented *Osmanthus delavayi*.

Finding a house for sale with not one but three walled gardens could be classed as extremely fortunate. Add to that the bonus of fertile, free-draining, alluvial soil beneath your feet, and it seems Polly Nicholson hit the horticultural jackpot when she, her husband Ed and their four children, moved to Blacklands ten years ago.

Polly's first priority was overseeing the renovation of the 18th-century house in Wiltshire, a task she clearly relished. Then she set about restoring the gardens, working hand in hand with designer Arne Maynard to create spaces that served as both a family garden and a workspace for Bayntun Flowers, Polly's artisan flower-growing and floristry business. Two of the three walled gardens have been restored. The third remains an unrestored yard for now, but Polly's commitment and enthusiasm strongly hints that there are further transformations ahead.

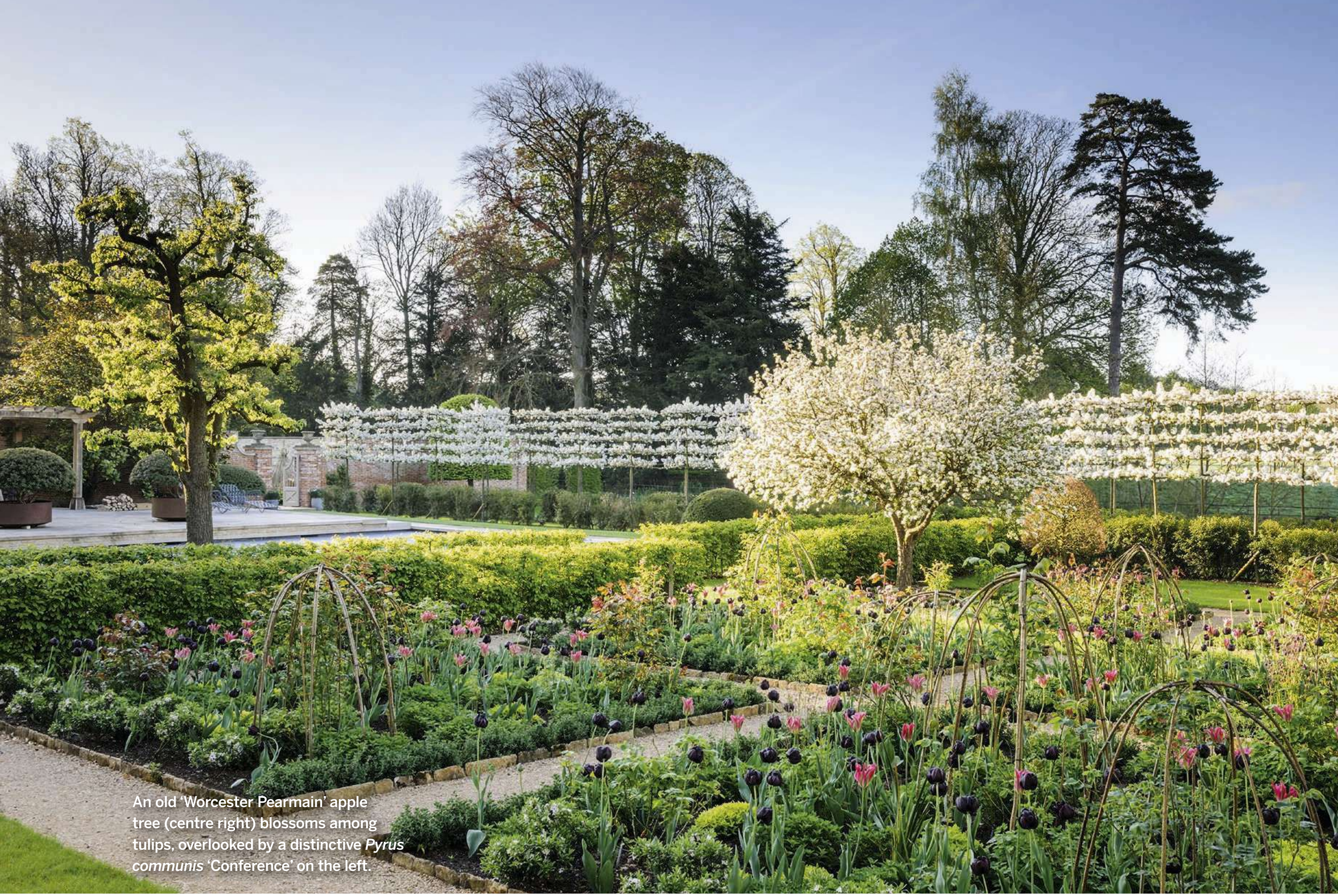
"We decided to do one part of the garden at a time, but to stick with one designer, because when you chop and change too much you end up not having a cohesive feel," Polly explains. She knew from the start that she didn't want anything that shouted 'look at me', a garden that would both echo and frame the beauty of the 120-acre estate around it, and the Malborough Downs beyond. "I wanted soft forms and something that linked with the landscape, so there is a lot of cloud hedging and topiary," she adds.

Polly Nicholson gathers a selection of tulips 'Cairo' and 'Spring Green'. Favourable soil conditions at Blacklands enable her to grow a vast array of sought-after flowers and foliage for florists and for bespoke displays. Her scented, naturalistic arrangements have the feel of an intricate floral tapestry.

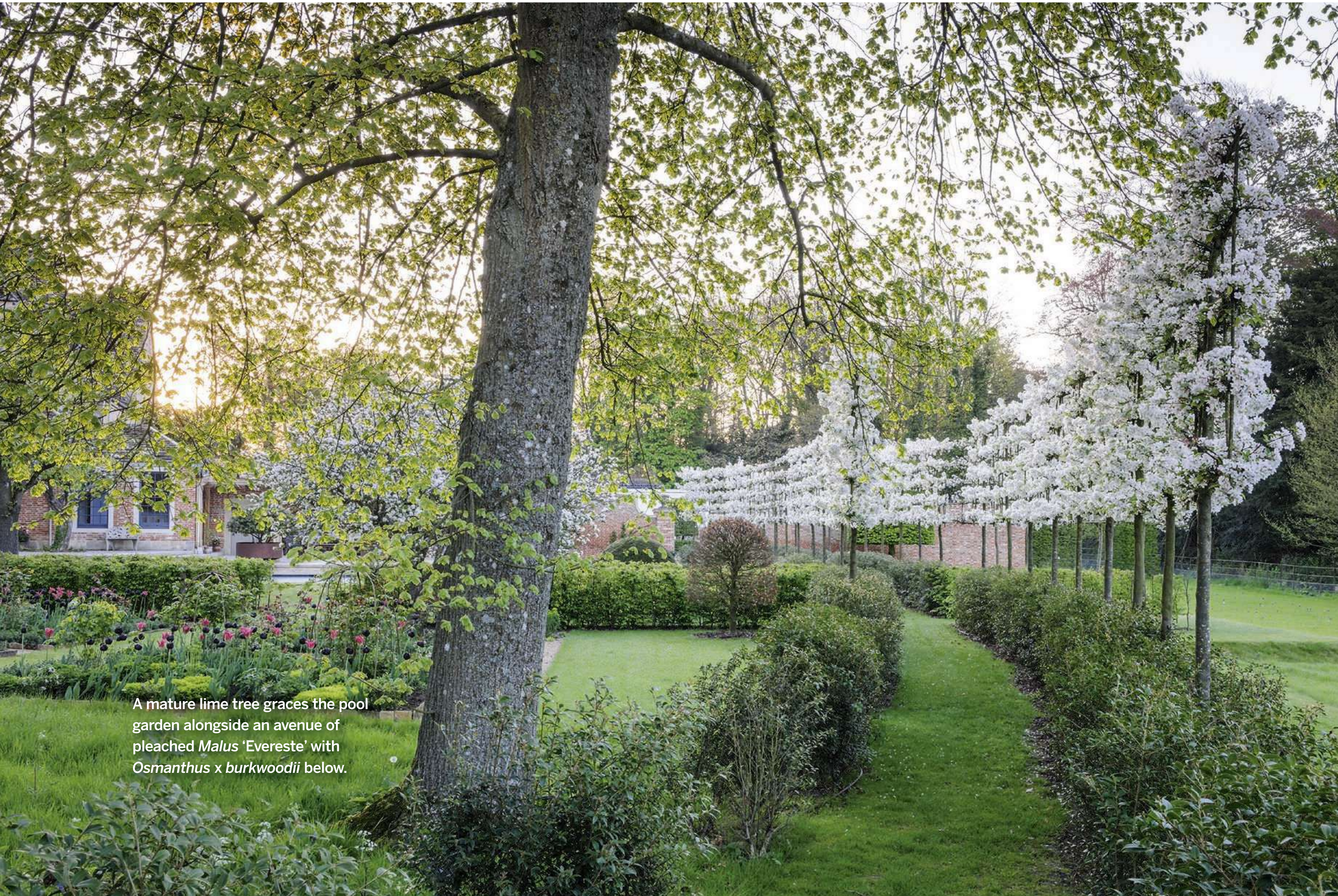
In April, it is the garden's breathtaking display of blossom that first catches the eye. There are curving rows of pleached crab apple *Malus* 'Evereste', echoed by the established fruit trees that were carefully incorporated into Maynard's design when the garden – now known as the pool garden – was remade. There is a swimming pool here, but it has been so carefully camouflaged it hardly registers with the eye; likewise the pool house is a potting shed that's been sympathetically extended and converted to a new role.

This garden has its own microclimate, a sun trap created by a tall brick wall that radiates heat and colour in summer – the perfect backdrop for taking a dip. But now, in spring, the beds are lit with the contrasting tones of the pink and green tulip 'Virichic' and the deep, dark 'Black Hero', all set into a patchwork of bee-friendly oreganos (*Origanum laevigatum* 'Hopleys' and lime-green *Origanum vulgare* 'Thumble's Variety') in beds edged with soft mounds of

To continue turn to page 42



An old 'Worcester Pearmain' apple tree (centre right) blossoms among tulips, overlooked by a distinctive *Pyrus communis* 'Conference' on the left.



A mature lime tree graces the pool garden alongside an avenue of pleached *Malus* 'Evereste' with *Osmanthus* x *burkwoodii* below.

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12 OF POLLY'S FAVOURITE PLANTS

1 *Malus domestica* 'Worcester Pearmain'
An early to mid-season eating apple, particularly noted for its beautiful blossom. 4-8m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b†.

2 *Pulsatilla vulgaris*
Pretty purple or white flowers followed by wispy seedheads that look great in arrangements. 20cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Cydonia oblonga*
Some years a late frost catches the glorious blossom and stops fruiting, but in glut years Polly loves to make quince ice cream. 4m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

4 *Helleborus* x *hybridus* Harvington red
This hellebore makes a good cut flower once the seedheads have formed, especially if the tips of the stems are seared. 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

5 *Tulipa* 'Black Hero'
This double late tulip is a heavier, headier 'Queen of Night' with long-lasting blooms. 60cm. RHS H6.

6 *Paeonia mlokosewitschii*
Blacklands has a whole block of this exquisite peony. It makes a wonderful if short-lived cut flower for events, although it won't stay the course in bouquets. 50cm-1m. AGM. RHS H6.

7 *Tulipa* 'Virichic'
A lily-flowered tulip with bold-pink petals with a green flash up the centre. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

8 *Fritillaria persica* 'Bicolor'
The bulbs of this dramatic and unusual fritillary are both eye-wateringly expensive and deeply desirable. 60cm-1m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

9 *Thalictrum* 'Elin'
A majestically tall umbel with unbeatable foliage and beautiful flowerheads that's perfect for the cutting garden. 2m. AGM. RHS H4.

10 *Malus* 'Evereste'
This crab apple offers the delights of red buds opening to white blossom followed by yellow-orange fruits that persist into winter. 4-8m. AGM. RHS H6.

11 *Erysimum cheiri* 'Giant Pink'
Richly coloured wallflower with extra-large blooms that's a welcome addition to spring cut-flower displays. 60cm. RHS H5.

12 *Centaurea* 'Jordy'
An elegant perennial cornflower for the cutting garden; support with pea sticks to prevent flopping. 45cm. RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

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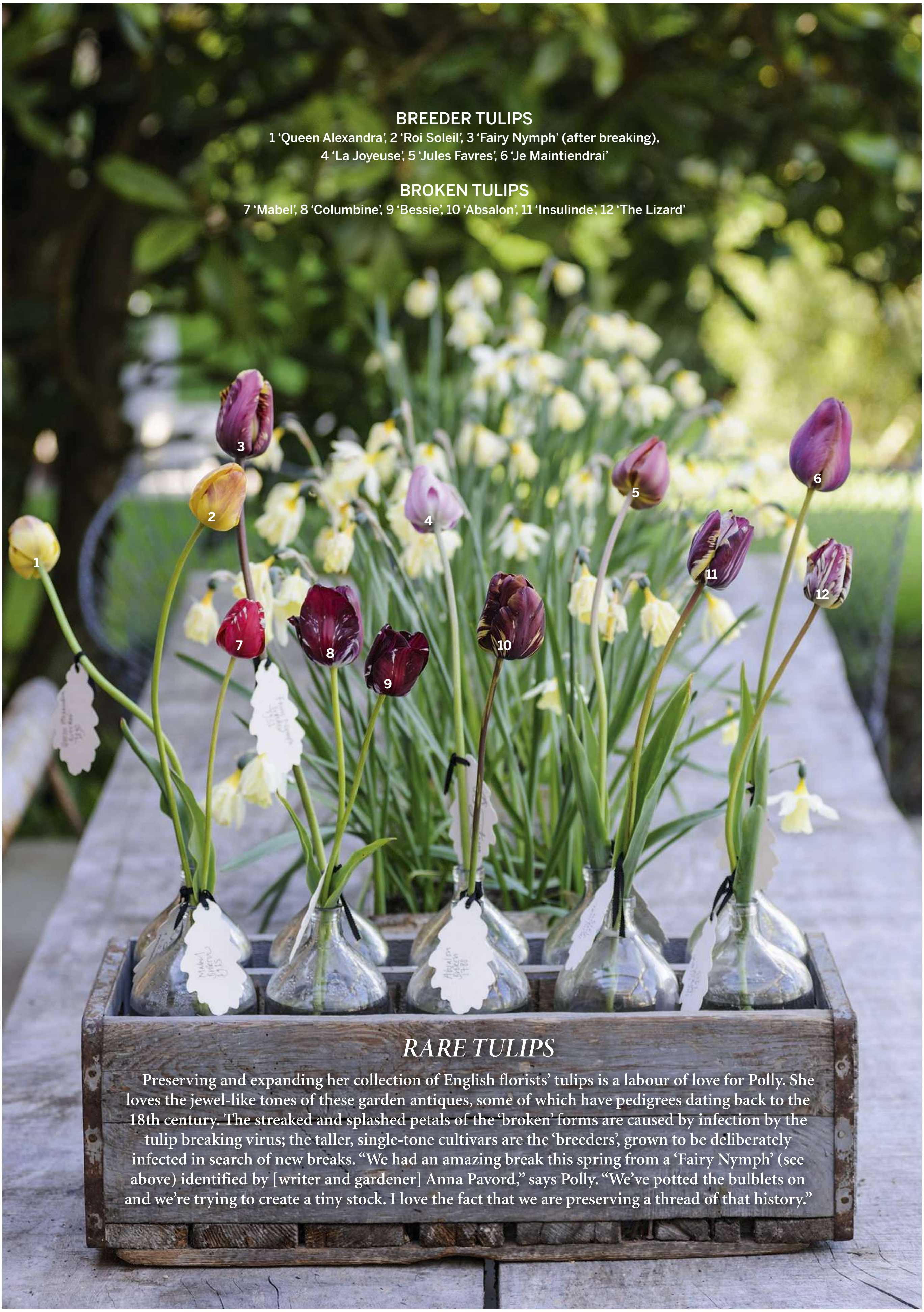

BREEDER TULIPS

1 'Queen Alexandra', 2 'Roi Soleil', 3 'Fairy Nymph' (after breaking),
4 'La Joyeuse', 5 'Jules Favres', 6 'Je Maintiendrai'

BROKEN TULIPS

7 'Mabel', 8 'Columbine', 9 'Bessie', 10 'Absalon', 11 'Insulinde', 12 'The Lizard'

RARE TULIPS

Preserving and expanding her collection of English florists' tulips is a labour of love for Polly. She loves the jewel-like tones of these garden antiques, some of which have pedigrees dating back to the 18th century. The streaked and splashed petals of the 'broken' forms are caused by infection by the tulip breaking virus; the taller, single-tone cultivars are the 'breeders', grown to be deliberately infected in search of new breaks. "We had an amazing break this spring from a 'Fairy Nymph' (see above) identified by [writer and gardener] Anna Pavord," says Polly. "We've potted the bulblets on and we're trying to create a tiny stock. I love the fact that we are preserving a thread of that history."

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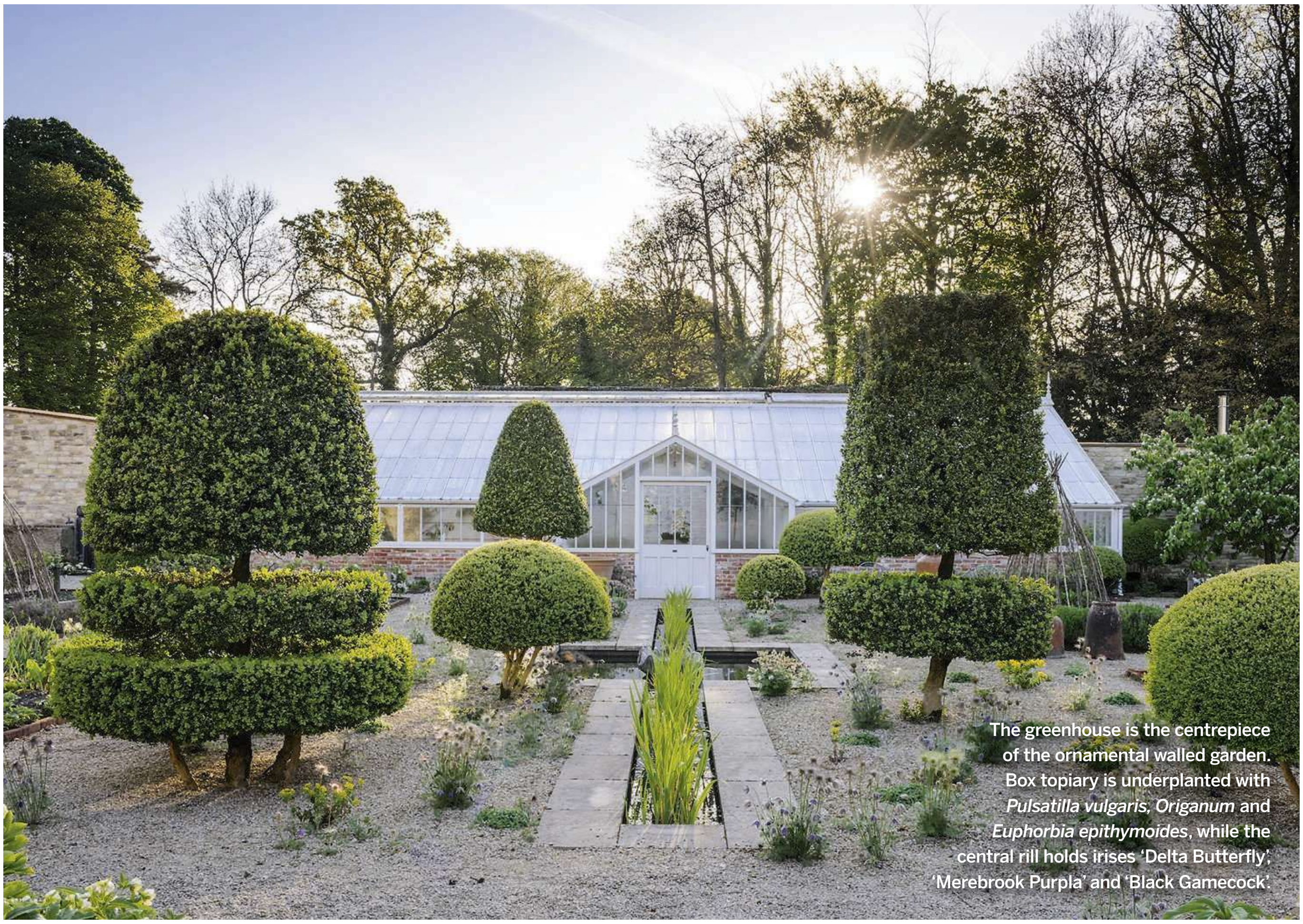
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



The greenhouse is the centrepiece of the ornamental walled garden. Box topiary is underplanted with *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, *Origanum* and *Euphorbia epithymoides*, while the central rill holds irises 'Delta Butterfly', 'Merebrook Purpla' and 'Black Gamecock'.

▷ *Daphne x transatlantica* Eternal Fragrance (= 'Blafra') and *Teucrium* x *lucidrys*.

There's evidence of Polly's clever eye for reusing and recycling unexpected items and materials throughout the garden, from the grid of garden riddles on the wall and the roof tiles redeployed to line beds, to the sheep's knuckles used to make a decorative flooring for the twig house, which provides shelter and shade. Working with a Chelsea award-winning garden designer allowed for another form of recycling. A characterful and productive 'Conference' pear tree graces the pool garden, while in the ornamental walled garden next door, delightfully mismatched box topiary shapes stand sentinel either side of the symmetrical water feature: all these specimens came from Maynard's 2012 Chelsea show garden for Laurent-Perrier. The neat structure of the box – kept in rude health by estate manager and topiary specialist Ed Heard – is balanced by the haze of planting in the gravel below, featuring *Pulsatilla* seedheads, oreganos and cushion spurge (*Euphorbia epithymoides*), which Polly describes as "just the right level of invasive in this context".

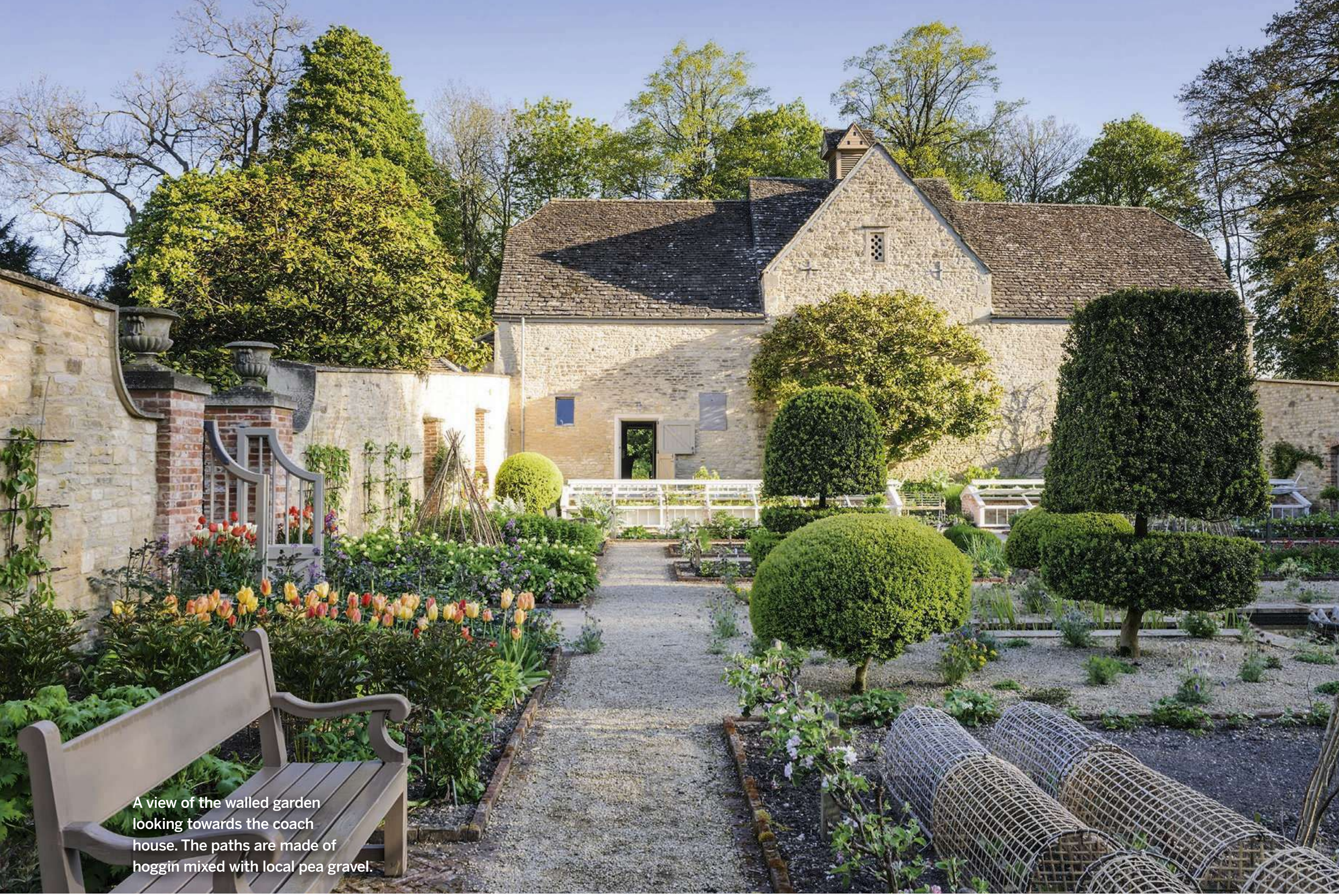
Once a tennis court, the walled garden is productive and ornamental in equal measure. The Foster & Pearson greenhouse is its working heart. One side is for propagating flowers and raising early spring bulbs for the floristry business, the other for growing tomatoes, chillies and flat peaches for the house. Although a separate flower field provides space for Polly's cut-flower-growing business, she also picks from her own gardens. Bayntun Flowers supplies flowers wholesale to select florists in London and in Wiltshire, as well as creating bespoke displays for events. Polly is constantly experimenting with rare, new and unusual flowers and bulbs, assisted by her head gardener and brilliant plantswoman Hannah Gardner. "The people I am supplying don't necessarily want bulk, they just want something different," she concludes. "And I can do different because I've got amazing soil, the expertise and this wonderful place to do it in." □

The greenhouse, described by Polly as "a wonderful light space that keeps the garden anchored", is used for propagating plants and growing early spring bulbs for the cut-flower business including the Dutch *Iris* 'Red Ember', *I.* 'Eye of Tiger' and *Iris tuberosa.*

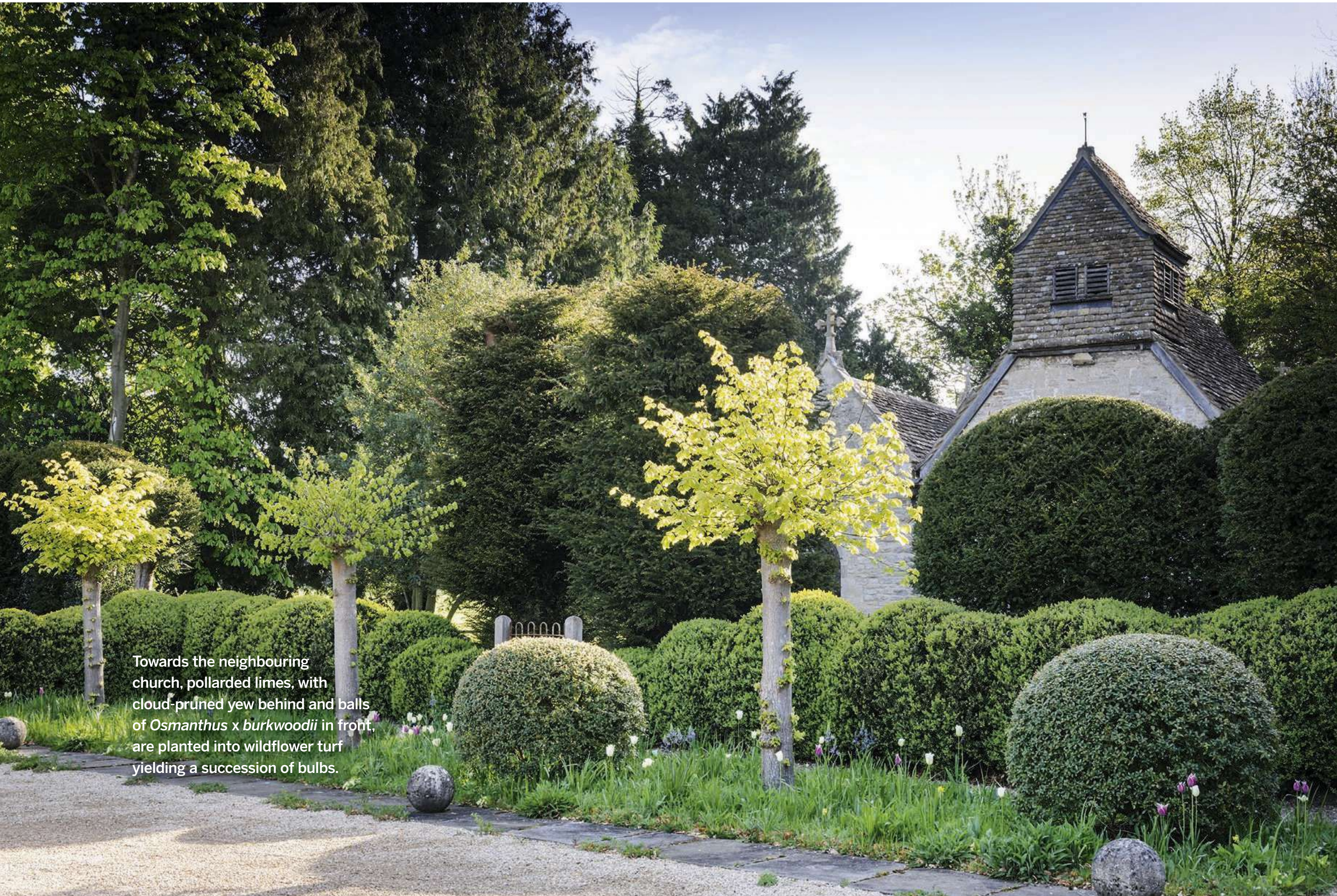
USEFUL INFORMATION

The garden is not generally open to the public aside from occasional open days for charity. Bayntun Flowers also runs seasonal events.

bayntunflowers.co.uk



A view of the walled garden looking towards the coach house. The paths are made of hoggin mixed with local pea gravel.



Towards the neighbouring church, pollarded limes, with cloud-pruned yew behind and balls of *Osmanthus* x *burkwoodii* in front, are planted into wildflower turf yielding a succession of bulbs.

TUMBLE TOWARDS SUMMER

Sissinghurst's head gardener Troy Scott Smith creates three simple displays that let spring blend seamlessly with early summer

WORDS **TROY SCOTT SMITH** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

HAPHAZARD LUXURIANCE

Colour provides the base note for any garden and it is the most potent design tool a gardener has. Gardening with colour is not about individual plants, but how plants with different colours are combined. Often, as with this display, the container is the starting point. This copper pot immediately suggested a pink *Argyranthemum* that would effortlessly complement the pot's verdigris patina and look deliciously fresh against the yellow Banksian rose behind.

How to achieve the look

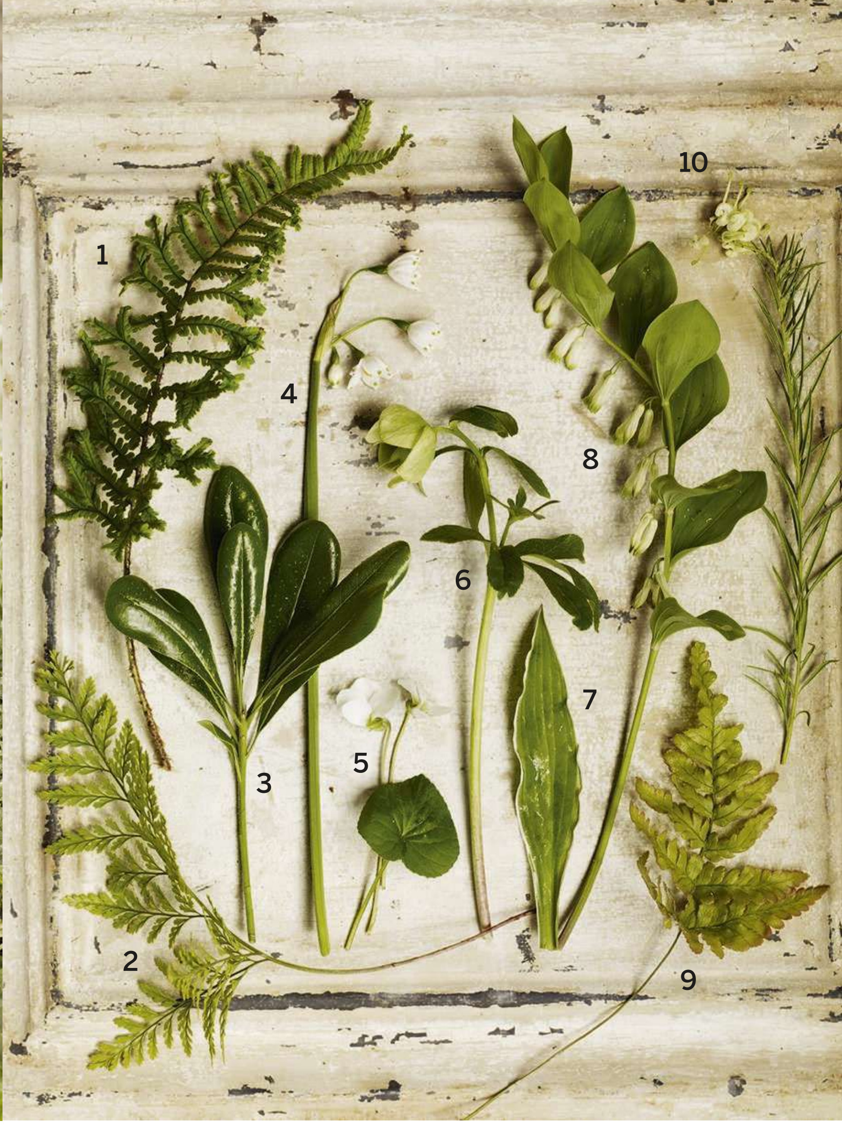
In this arrangement for a corner of the Courtyard at Sissinghurst, I studied the colour of each ingredient, including the copper pot and the neighbouring plants, before deciding on the colour and shape of the flower to use in the display. The pot sets the narrative – it's the colour of the Adriatic Sea and is embedded with the history of the garden and the lives of all who have gardened here; any plant is merely a supporting player. To bring the colour alive I've chosen a pink form of *Argyranthemum*, a native of the Canary Islands. Both its grey-green leaves and daisy-like pink flowers work beautifully with the blue of the copper pot while the yellow boss at the centre of each pink flower socialises well with the *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea' that swirls and eddies around the arrangement from April through to June. I purposefully chose to contrast the ruggedness of the pot with the informal planting that generously spills and sprawls lending a lavish and romantic quality. In the pot, as with all three displays, I've used a peat-free compost with added leaf mould and up to 6mm grit. To link the pot to its surroundings I've planted more *Argyranthemum* around the base, and this combines with other low-growing plants to give a lovely dissolved fraying feeling towards the edges. Behind it the exuberance of the tumbling *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea', foaming and frothing in abundance with butter-yellow flowers, enhances the overall feeling of haphazard luxuriance I so desired.

Plants

1 *Argyranthemum* 'Petite Pink'
A woody-based, evergreen perennial or sub shrub, from the Canary Islands, with blue-green, dissected linear foliage and numerous flowers. Its daisy-like flowers bloom from late spring to autumn. 50cm. AGM*. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11†.

Also look out for the older pink cultivar *Argyranthemum* 'Mary Wootton' (70cm), which has large, anemone-centred, soft-pink flowers or the long-flowering, semi-shrubby cultivar *Argyranthemum* 'Jamaica Primrose' (90cm) with soft-yellow flowers.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



JAR IS THE STAR

This jar, made during the Ming Dynasty, was once used to transport porcelain from China to Egypt. It was brought back from Egypt in 1937 and placed at the centre of a rose garden. That rose garden eventually became Sissinghurst's famous White Garden but the jar stayed put. It's so striking it doesn't really need plants, but I like to surround it with a selection of pots that can change with the seasons and which allows me to introduce more tender plants earlier in the year.

How to achieve the look

Vita experimented with many different plants for this jar, but returned time and again to *Lilium formosanum* var. *pricei* followed by *Puya alpestris*. I continue to experiment and have a chosen the shrub *Pittosporum tobira* to give the jar a fresh top. It's surrounded by a supporting cast of a predominantly green and white scheme. By using many pots I can easily adjust the grouping; as one pot goes over I can whip it away and replace it with another, already prepared and waiting in the nursery. I'm careful not to allow one single plant to assume a starring role or to outshine the jar. The arrangement should offer delight, but also a moment of pause among the sparkling pools of white flowers and glimmering silver-grey foliage all around.

Plants

1 *Dryopteris affinis* 'Cristata'
A fern that's very effective in a pot and useful for difficult situations. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H5.

2 *Davallia mariesii*
An epiphytic fern native of Japan, with rhizomes covered in brown scales. 20cm. AGM. RHS H2.

3 *Pittosporum tobira*
Medium-sized, evergreen shrub with glossy leaves. 4.5m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 9a-10b.

4 *Leucojum aestivum*
Known as the summer snowflake, it actually flowers in spring. 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

5 *Viola sororia* 'Albiflora'
White flowers with delicate violet lines radiating from the throat. 15cm.

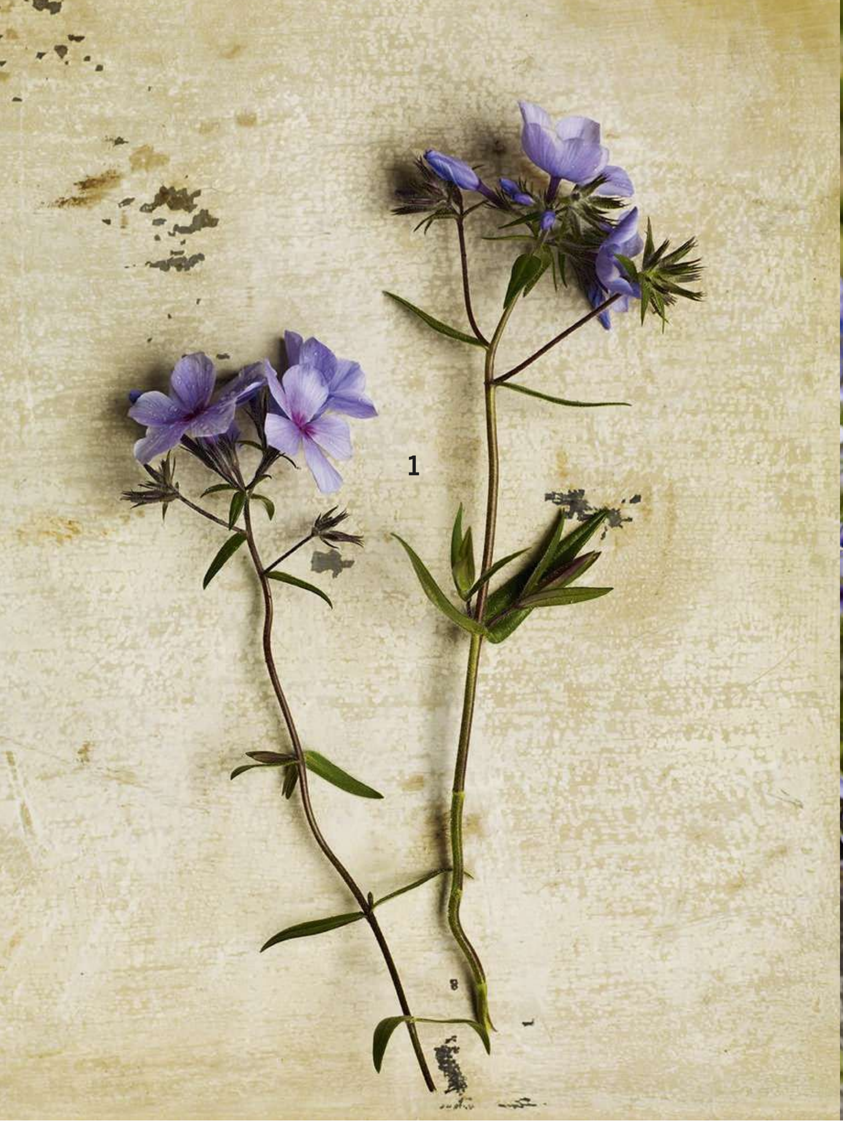
6 *Helleborus* x *hybridus*
Easy to grow in partial or full shade 60cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

7 *Hosta* 'Ginko Craig'
A low-growing hosta with narrow leaves edged in white (more white when placed in shade). 30cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

8 *Polygonatum* x *hybridum*
Gracefully arching stems with glaucous, blue foliage unfurling to reveal pure-white, pendent flowers. 75cm. AGM. RHS H7.

9 *Dryopteris erythrosora*
One of the best garden ferns with warm, pinky-bronze, new fronds. 60cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

10 *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* 'Lutea'
Australian shrub with needle-like foliage. Needs winter protection. 2m.



THINGS TO COME

My favourite arrangements are often those composed of a single plant, rather than a combination of two or more. The unfussiness of the single plant display allows your attention to focus on the detail; be that the weathered patterning of a trough or the composition of the flowers. But it does mean you constantly need to think a season ahead to ensure you have a seamless display of colour, so even before April's plants fade I will have planted up the phlox to be ready for June.

How to achieve the look

When introducing any new plants into the garden, my philosophy is always is to plant only the best things and only the best forms of the best things. One recent introduction is the purple *Phlox divaricata* subsp. *laphamii* 'Chattahoochee'. It's the perfect choice for this kind of singleton living, having impeccable manners and every quality you could wish for, yet holding it all in perfect balance. It can sometimes be a little tricky to cultivate, especially if you decide, as I have done, to grow it in a container, but its profusion of delicately scented blue flowers with crimson centres are so instantly desirable and utterly irresistible it's worth the effort. Its stems are brittle but threading a small cage of light pea sticks through the plant for support can help. Also be careful when watering that you don't splash too much water on the foliage as this can sometimes lead to rot. When you're considering an arrangement that uses just one plant, you should consider what type of pot or container to use as carefully as the plant itself. It must be a pot that already has, or one to which you're happy to add, drainage holes. With troughs it's also important to ensure the drainage hole is kept open by using crocks. I've used a raised sink that Vita herself installed at Sissinghurst. It's next to the Library door so the delicate perfume of the phlox gently ambushes you as you enter or leave. It's also east facing, which seems to provide the phlox with just the right amount of light and shade it likes.

Plant

1 *Phlox divaricata* subsp. *laphamii* 'Chattahoochee'
A low-growing, spreading phlox with willowy stems topped with loose clusters of large, slightly fragrant, tubular, pale-lavender-blue flowers that have maroon throats. It likes a position sheltered from the wind and a well-drained soil that doesn't dry out. 30cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

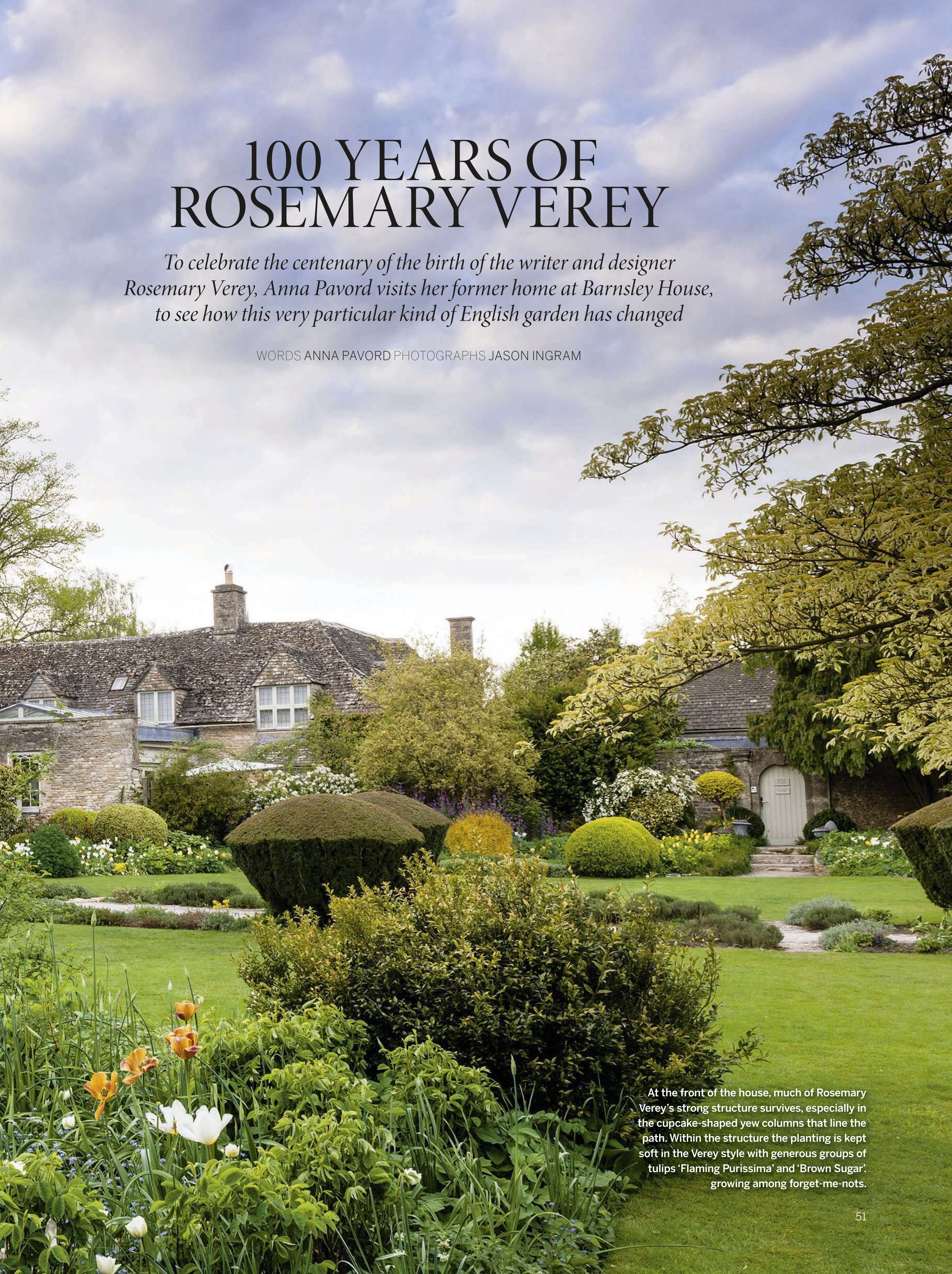
IN BRIEF

Name Barnsley House.
What Garden made by the late Rosemary Verey.
Where Barnsley, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.
Size Four acres.
Soil Fast-draining Cotswold brash, improved over time with compost and leaf mould.
Climate Occasional harsh winters and late spring frosts.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

100 YEARS OF ROSEMARY VEREY

To celebrate the centenary of the birth of the writer and designer Rosemary Verey, Anna Pavord visits her former home at Barnsley House, to see how this very particular kind of English garden has changed

WORDS ANNA PAVORD PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



At the front of the house, much of Rosemary Verey's strong structure survives, especially in the cupcake-shaped yew columns that line the path. Within the structure the planting is kept soft in the Verey style with generous groups of tulips 'Flaming Purissima' and 'Brown Sugar'. growing among forget-me-nots.

THE FIRST TIME I MOWED THE LAWN, I PUT STRIPES ON IT. MRS VEREY WASN'T VERY HAPPY ABOUT THAT

Rosemary Verey was an important inspiration for the generation of gardeners who took to their trowels in the 1980s. Her book *The Englishwoman's Garden* (1980) was the first she'd written, but it was a huge success and highlighted a very particular kind of English garden, with formal framework, billowing borders, and as many bits of architectural salvage as could be managed.

The book, a collection of essays by garden owners, included one by Rosemary herself, setting out her thoughts on what a good garden should contain. 'Use must be made of the longest distances to create vistas, to lead the eye on and on. Each area of the garden must merge smoothly into the next, each have different moods and areas of light and shade. The garden must be designed to look inviting even in winter, when evergreens and shapes assume importance. Sweet smelling winter flowering shrubs should be near the house. An element of surprise is essential.'

Few of us now have gardens that can lead the eye 'on and on' without bumping into something it would rather not see. But the lessons in that masterly essay are still relevant to anyone making a garden for the first time. We can borrow from Barnsley, as Rosemary herself borrowed. Her famous Laburnum Walk was modelled on one she had seen at Bodnant in north Wales. Alongside a fine stone terrace overlooked by a crenellated verandah, she laid out a knot garden, a clever over-and-under pattern of box, both plain and variegated, interlaced with *Teucrium*, the design taken from an early book by Gervase Markham. The complex potager that she made in a field adjoining the garden was inspired by a visit to Villandry. The design was taken from a gardening book by William Lawson, first published in 1617. She had a fine library of antiquarian gardening books, collected before anyone else thought they mattered.

When Rosemary and her husband, David Verey, first moved to his family home, Barnsley, gardening was not a priority. Rosemary grassed over the borders that had been laid out by his parents; space for croquet, tennis (at which she excelled) and ponies was more important. But she was galvanised into action when her husband arranged for the garden designer Percy Cane to advise on a scheme. She would do it herself, she said. And she did. She started work when she was in her mid-forties, taking her first planting inspiration from Norah Lindsay's work at Sutton Courtenay. Barnsley House subsequently became so famous, that 30,000 visitors each year made the pilgrimage to see it. And Rosemary's own fame grew as she began to design gardens for some seriously famous (and rich) clients, such as Prince Charles at nearby Highgrove and Sir Elton John.

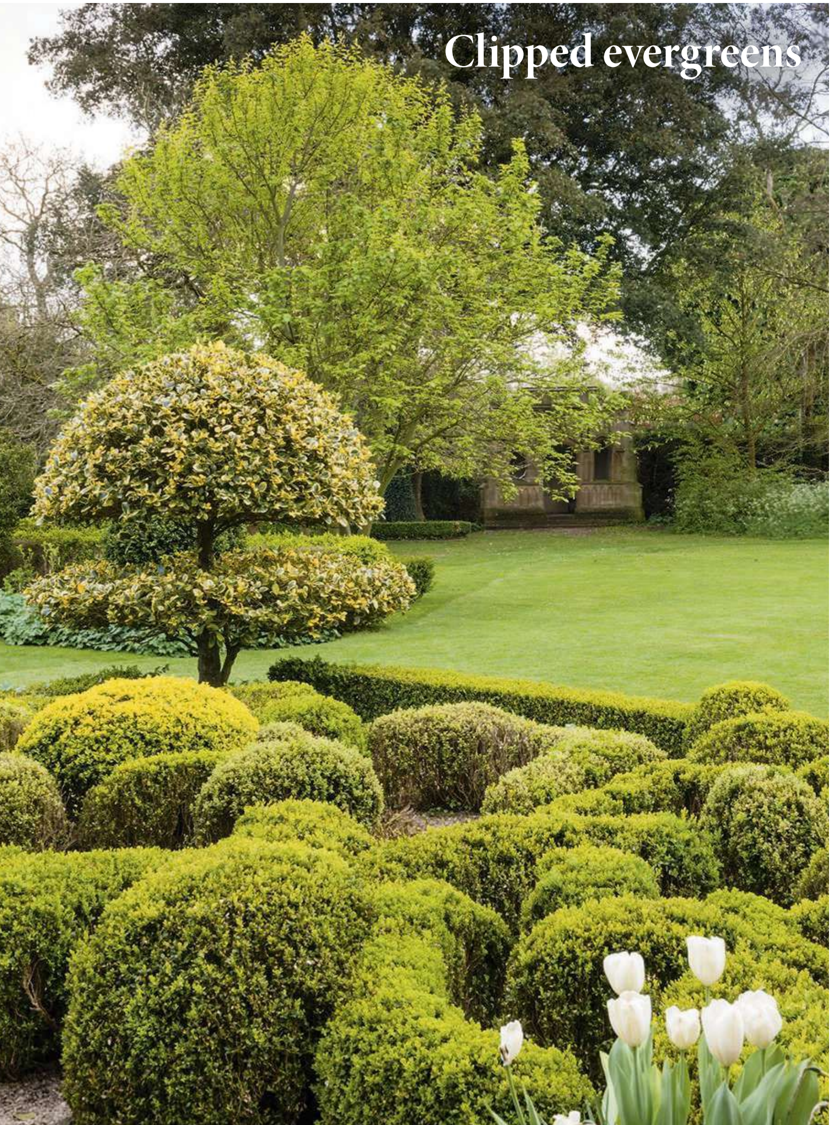
Barnsley House is now a hotel, but head gardener Richard Gatenby was hired by Rosemary herself, two years before she died in 2001. "We both liked whippets. I think that got me the job," he says. He admits that his employer was a woman of strong opinions, trenchantly expressed.

To continue turn to page 57

Right One of Barnsley House's most iconic features has long been its Laburnum Walk. Rosemary planted the laburnums, a silver wedding anniversary present from her brother, in 1964 and underplanted this tunnel of yellow hanging flowers with purple alliums. Fifty years later, when the trees began to fail, head gardener Richard Gatenby took the hard decision to take them down and start again with new laburnum trees, here underplanted with bright-red *Tulipa* 'Apeldoorn'.

Vistas

Abundance



Clipped evergreens

Simon Verity sculpture

KEY ELEMENTS

VISTAS

Rosemary Verey always understood the importance of creating long sight-lines in the garden. One of the best at Barnsley connects the famous Laburnum Walk with a lime walk, giving a view all the way through to the classical pavilion by the lily pool.

CLIPPED EVERGREENS

Rosemary Verey's book *Classic Garden Design* (1984) illustrates how much she learned from gardens of the past, with their topiary, knot gardens and box-edged beds. All are incorporated in the Barnsley garden, providing structure and interest even in the depths of winter.

ABUNDANCE

The Verey style depended on a formal framework, softened by generous, overflowing planting of old roses and herbaceous perennials. The structure remains intact at Barnsley, but the plants Rosemary Verey used have been joined by dahlias and an abundance of annuals, such as clarkias, tobacco plants, poppies and zinnias.

SIMON VERITY SCULPTURE

The sculptor Simon Verity is perhaps now best known for the work he did on the west portal of Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York, where he was director of carving from 1988-1997. But some of his earliest work was commissioned by Rosemary Verey: the figure of a lady dressed for the hunt, the two stone gardeners who sit either side of the door leading to the potager, and the delicious frog fountain close to the Laburnum Walk.

POTAGER

There's no English word that quite matches the French one we still use to describe a mixture of vegetables, fruit and flowers laid out in a formal design. Rosemary Verey introduced and popularised the potager – tunnels hung with courgettes and pumpkins, fruit trees trained in goblets and fans, and box-edged beds of chard and salad crops.

Potager

LESSONS IN ROSEMARY'S MASTERLY ESSAYS ARE STILL RELEVANT TO ANYONE MAKING A GARDEN FOR THE FIRST TIME

ANDREW LAWSON / MARIANNE MAJERUS PICTURE LIBRARY

ROSEMARY VEREY'S LIFE

1918	Rosemary Isabel Baird Sandilands born at Gillingham, Kent on 21 December
1939	Marries David Verey, an architectural historian
1951	Moves with David to his parents' house in Barnsley, Gloucestershire
1962	Begins work on the garden, influenced by garden designers Norah Lindsay and Russell Page
1970	First opens garden to the public
1980	Publishes her first book, *The Englishwoman's Garden*
1980s	Designs gardens for Princess Michael of Kent, Sir Elton John and HRH The Prince of Wales
1996	Publishes *Making of a Garden*, explaining how she designed and maintained the Barnsley garden. Receives an OBE
2001	Dies on 31 May

▷ "The first time I mowed the lawn, I put stripes on it. Mrs Verey wasn't very happy about that." Inevitably, some things have changed, some plantings have been simplified, but the iconic elements are all in place: the knot garden, the long stone-flagged path that provides the central axis of the garden, lined with drums of yew topiary, the beautiful lily pool with its classical temple and tumble of 'Cecile Brunner' roses. And the Laburnum Walk.

The tunnelled walk presented Richard with his most anxious moments at Barnsley. The laburnums (*L.* x *watereri* 'Vossii'), which had been there for almost 50 years, were beginning to fail. In February 2015, he stood in the tunnel, chainsaw in hand, feeling, he says, "like an executioner", and cut down the old plants. The supports were shifted slightly so the new laburnums could be planted in fresh ground and, fortunately, they are all doing well. The advantage, as he points out, is that the underplanting has benefited from the increased space and light. Hostas (a present to Rosemary from garden writer and designer Penelope Hobhouse) and epimediums are growing with renewed vigour.

Here, a replica of what had gone before was the only option. The Laburnum Walk is an iconic Barnsley image. But Richard "doesn't feel shackled" by how things used to be. By the time he arrived at Barnsley, the garden had already changed from the one Rosemary had described in her earlier books. "Keep it vigorous. That's my aim." Gently, canopies have been raised on some of the fine trees that David Verey introduced – the snake-bark maple (*Acer capillipes*), a beautiful *Acer griseum*, a variegated tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Aureomarginatum') and *Magnolia* x *soulangeana* planted in the 1960s in the pool garden. *Hebe pinguifolia* 'Sutherlandii' now edges some of the beds in place of blighted box. Some of the borders, which had become infested with bindweed and ground elder, are gradually being renovated, with mixes of annuals in place of perennials. And on the lawn, Richard has now dared to introduce stripes. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Barnsley House, Barnsley, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 5EE.
Tel 01285 740000. **Web** barnsleyhouse.com

Open Barnsley House is now a boutique hotel and one of the nicest ways to see the garden is to take it in with lunch or tea at the hotel. Private tours of the garden are available by arrangement, see website for details. This year the garden is also open for NGS on 10 April (admission £5) and as part of the Barnsley Village Festival on 19 May. Head gardener Richard Gatenby occasionally writes about the garden at **thegardensatbarnsleyhouse.blogspot.co.uk**

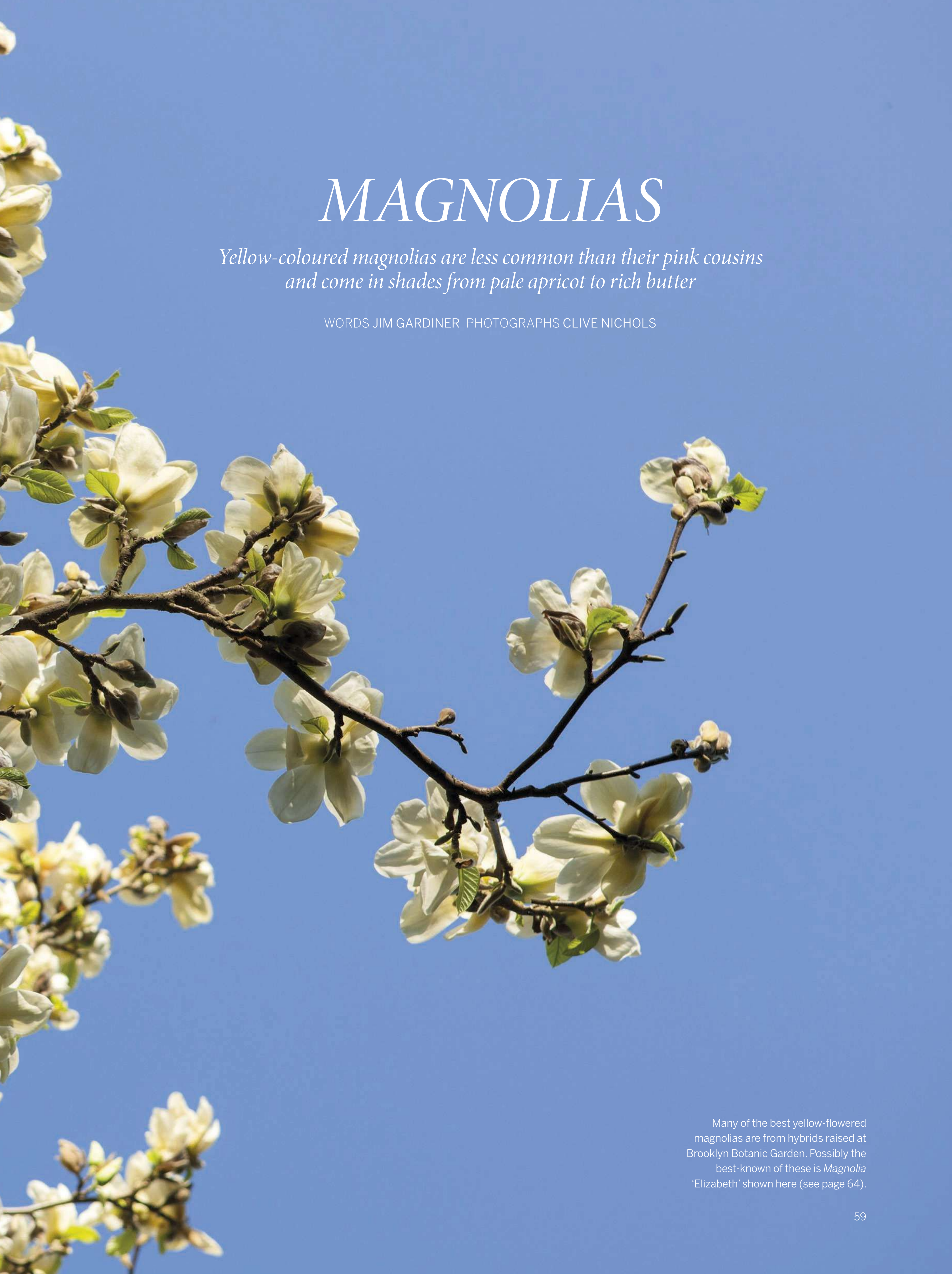
Reader offer *Gardens Illustrated* readers can take advantage of our special offer comprising an overnight stay at Barnsley House and guided garden tour. Turn to page 113 for details.

Left Rosemary's signature abundant style of planting continues at Barnsley House. Here a mix of spring flowers, including the pale-yellow *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* and rich-red *Tulipa* 'Lasting Love', are underplanted with forget-me-nots and surrounded by a lush mix of shrubs and hostas.

MAGNOLIAS

Yellow-coloured magnolias are less common than their pink cousins and come in shades from pale apricot to rich butter

WORDS **JIM GARDINER** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLIVE NICHOLS**



Many of the best yellow-flowered magnolias are from hybrids raised at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Possibly the best-known of these is *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth' shown here (see page 64).

Walking along many suburban streets in March and April you will be wowed by the power of magnolias seen in shades of pink and purple as well as white. Almost certainly, these will be *Magnolia* x *soulangeana* the hybrid created at the beginning of the 19th century by the Frenchman Étienne Soulange-Bodin. He crossed the yulan, *Magnolia denudata,* with the mu-lan, *Magnolia liliiflora*.

Fast forward to the 1950s. A team of women including Evamaria Sperber, Doris Stone and my friend Lola Koerting were carrying out hybridisation programmes at Brooklyn Botanic Garden using seed of the American *Magnolia acuminata* with pollen from the two Asiatic species used by Soulange-Bodin. They wanted to use their native species because it has yellow flowers (also green and blue), is exceptionally hardy, tolerant of many soil types and has a variable habit from a large shrub to a tree.

Magnolia 'Elizabeth' (hybrid with *M. denudata*) is probably the best known hybrid raised by Brooklyn Botanic Garden and named in 1978. It's one of the first yellow magnolias to flower in April with soft, primrose-yellow flowers that appear before the foliage. Although initially upright in habit, it will ultimately develop into a small, round-headed tree.

The first *Magnolia* x *brooklynensis* (hybrid with *M. liliiflora*) was 'Evamaria', which was named in 1968. Its tulip-shaped flowers are a suffusion of rose with yellow and green running though the tepals. This flowers before the leaves open while *M.* x *brooklynensis* 'Yellow Bird' flowers a lot later with bright-yellow flowers that open at the same time as the leaves in late April or early May. Unexpected results have been seen when *M.* x *brooklynensis* has been used as a seed parent. One such magnolia is 'Daybreak'. Rather than having yellow flowers, 'Daybreak' has flowers that are rose pink in colour and, unlike some magnolias, are fragrant. Once they have opened fully, the flowers reveal a hint of green, making it one of the most eye catching and unmistakable of the magnolias that flower during late April and May. The fact that it grows into a small, columnar tree makes it one of the most appealing magnolias for a smaller garden too. At a time when gardens seem to be getting smaller, a narrow, upright habit is a great trait to see in trees. Another good cultivar exhibiting this quality is 'Judy Zuk', which is named after a former president of Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Its tulip-shaped flowers are apricot in colour, striped rose on the outside and flower in May along with the foliage.

Several good yellows that are extremely hardy have been introduced by plant breeder Phil Savage from his home in Michigan. One of his introductions, 'Butterflies', is one of the first to flower in March, while 'Gold Star', with star-shaped, cream-coloured flowers, and 'Yellow Lantern', with tulip-shaped, lemon-yellow flowers, start flowering in late March or early April. These early magnolias work well when planted with spring-flowering bulbs, especially scillas, chionodoxas and muscaris, but dwarf narcissi can also be used to great effect. *Cyclamen hederifolium* with its marbled leaves also works well adding six months of interest from September when their flowers are seen. Primroses too add interest especially when seen in large drifts, while patio clematis grown as groundcover will extend interest throughout the summer months.

Magnolias of all persuasions like a moisture-retentive soil regardless of whether it's acid or slightly alkaline. Most can be grown in full sun or part shade and are surprisingly tolerant of exposure. Those early flowering *M.* x *soulangeana* so often seen on suburban streets are generally best suited to suburbia, which tends to be a degree or two warmer than the surrounding countryside, but the yellows, which flower a few weeks later, are able to adapt to a wider range of climates making them even more impressive. □

• Author Jim Gardiner is RHS vice president and a former Wisley curator, and an expert on magnolias. His recommendations for the best yellow-flowered magnolias can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

What Deciduous trees and shrubs with narrow to round-headed crowns. Grown for their flower colour, their variable habit allows them to be grown in gardens of all sizes.

Origins Originally from North America, magnolias spread south to Central and South America and east to Asia, primarily to China, Japan and Korea as well as Malaysia and Indonesia.

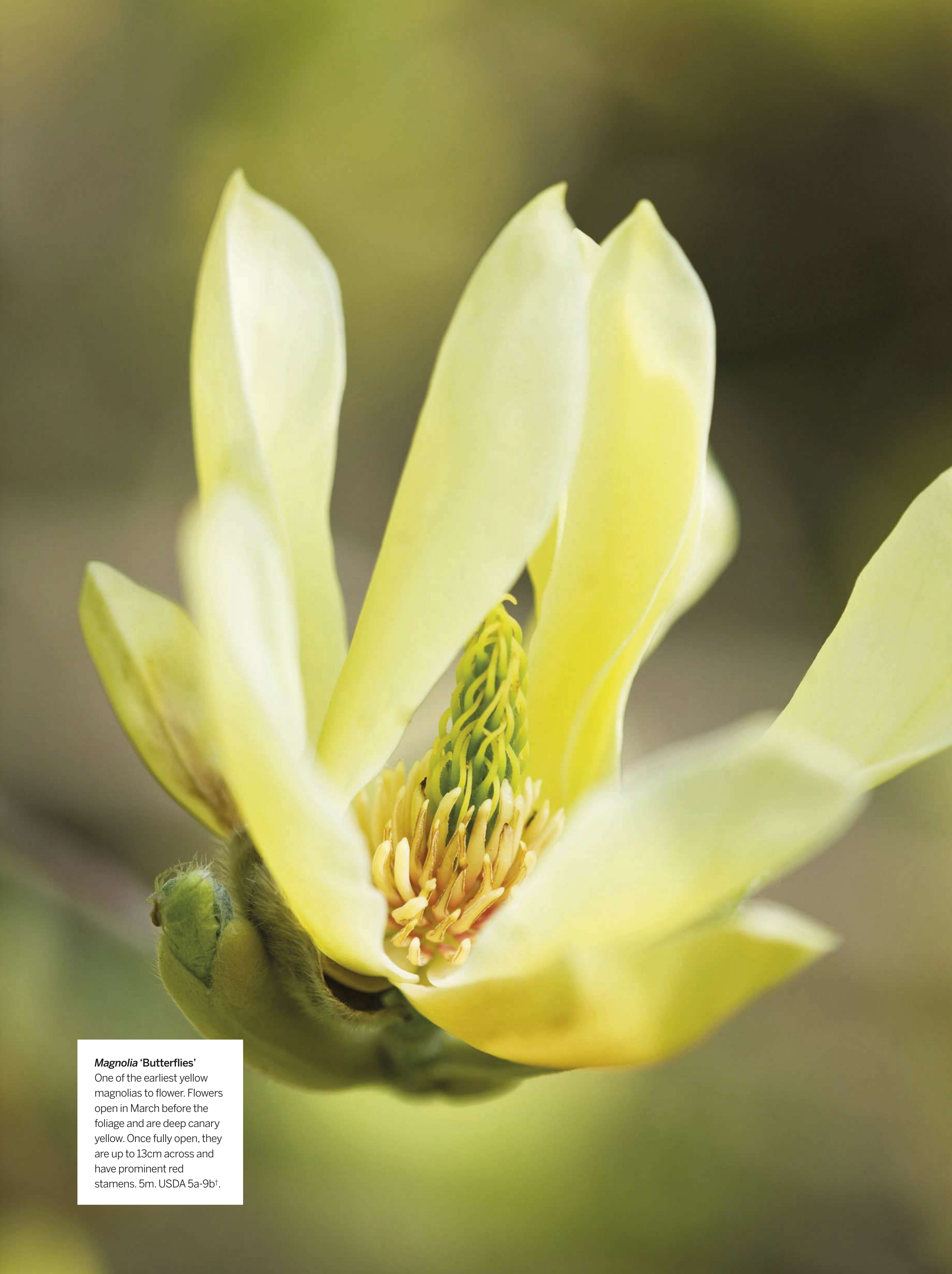
Season Flowers are seen in April, although some cultivars flower as early as March and some as late as May. The later ones flower with their foliage.

Hardiness These yellow-flowered magnolias are generally hardy throughout the UK and northern Europe. Most of those featured here have an RHS hardiness rating of H6 (-15°C to -20°C).

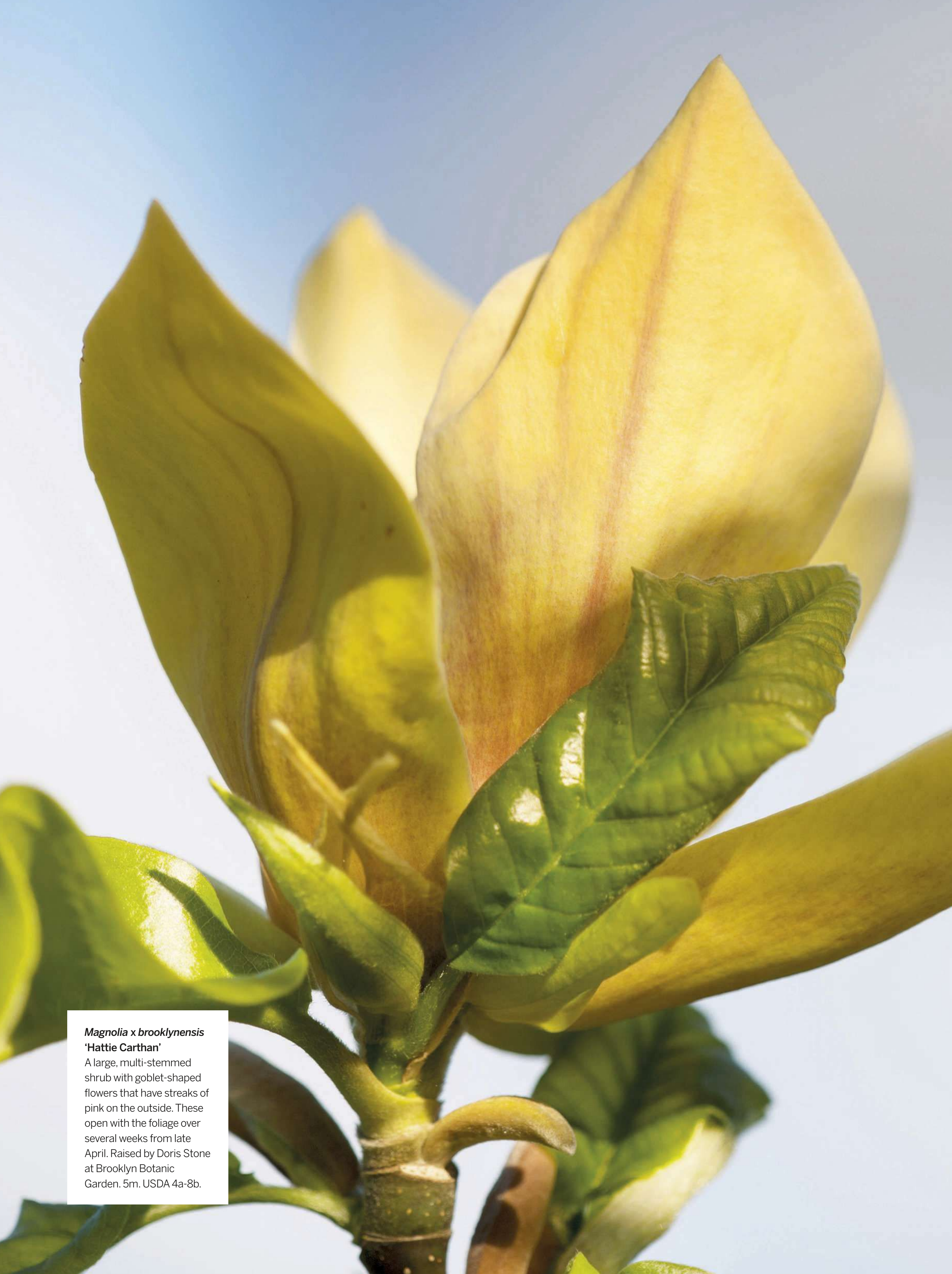
Size Depending on cultivar, magnolias can reach around 6m after ten years.

Conditions They grow well in most moisture-retentive soils in full sun or part shade but resent thin, chalky soils.

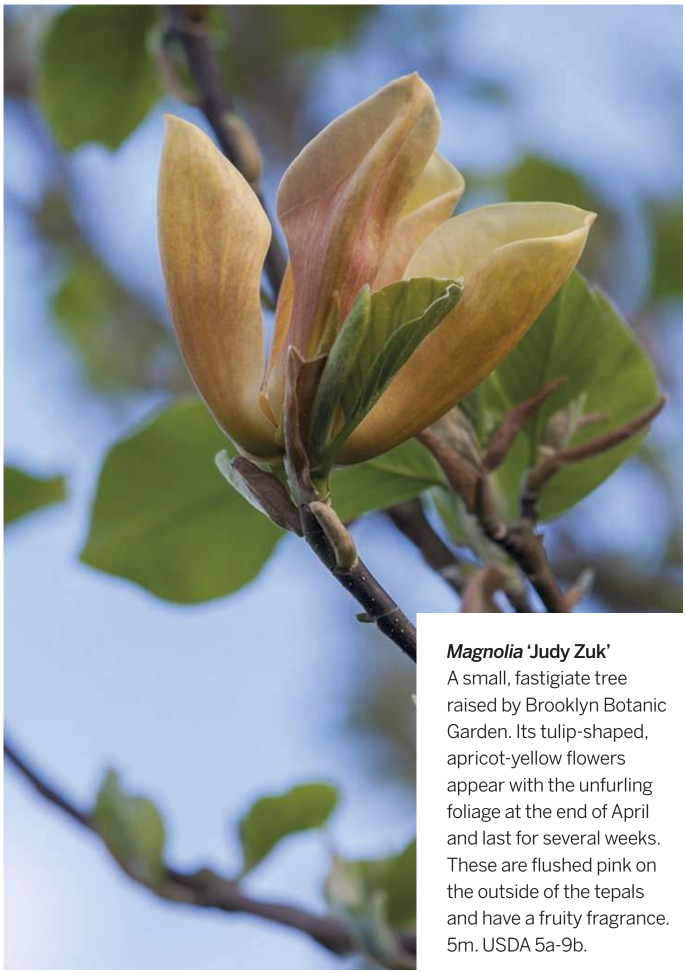
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

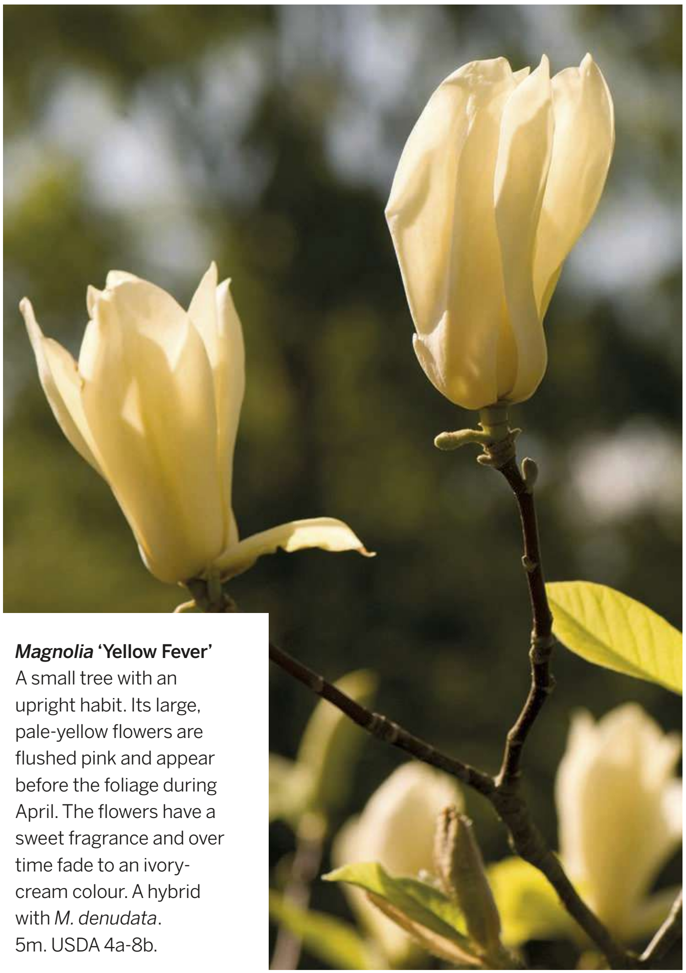


***Magnolia* 'Butterflies'**
One of the earliest yellow magnolias to flower. Flowers open in March before the foliage and are deep canary yellow. Once fully open, they are up to 13cm across and have prominent red stamens. 5m. USDA 5a-9b†.



***Magnolia* x *brooklynensis* 'Hattie Carthan'**
A large, multi-stemmed shrub with goblet-shaped flowers that have streaks of pink on the outside. These open with the foliage over several weeks from late April. Raised by Doris Stone at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. 5m. USDA 4a-8b.



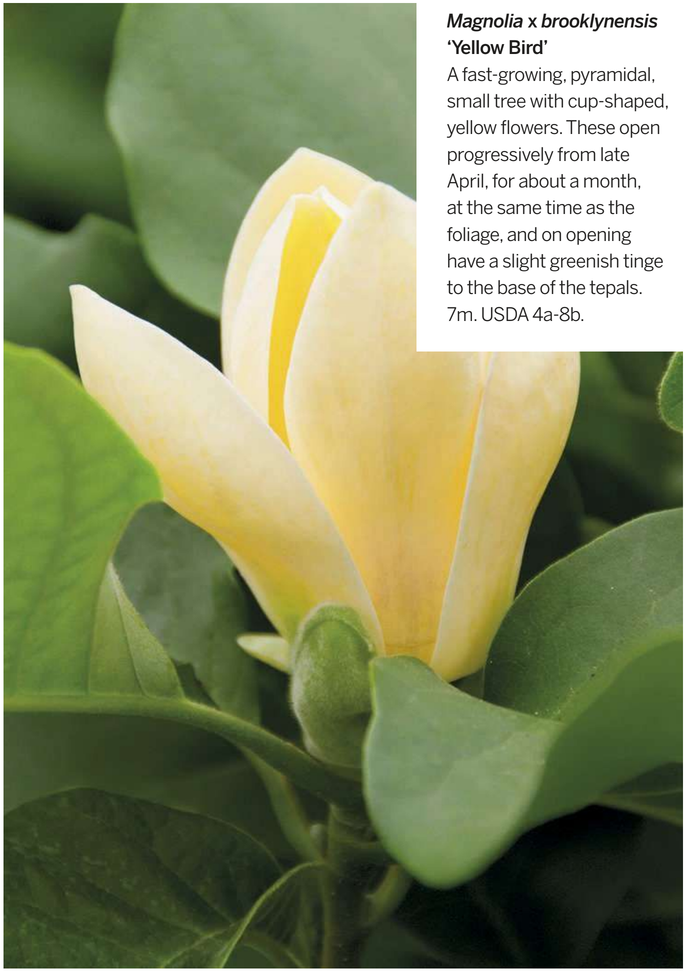


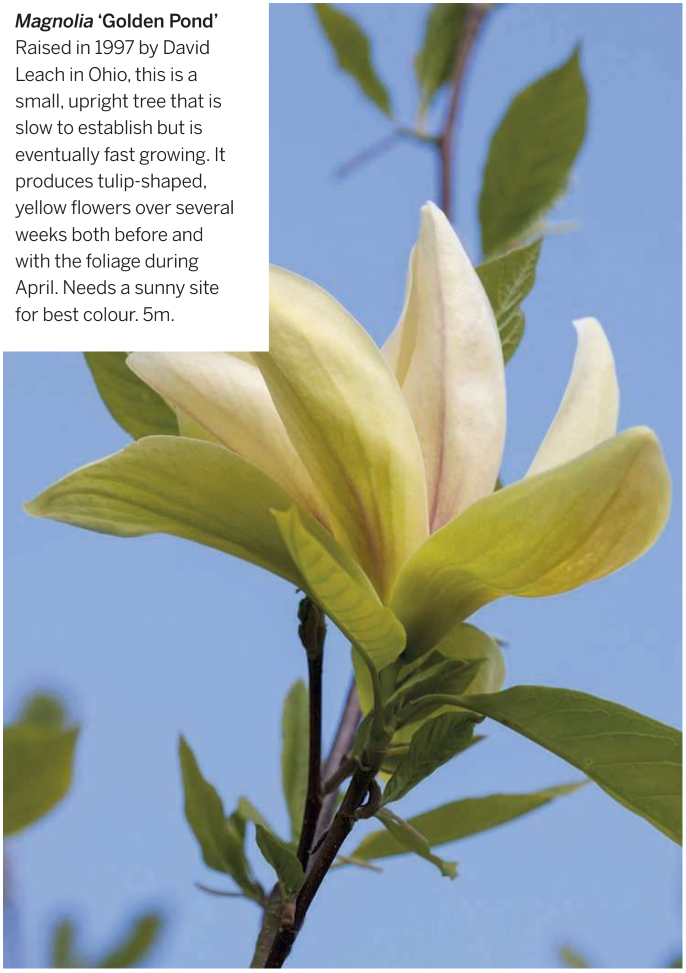
***Magnolia* 'Judy Zuk'**
A small, fastigiate tree raised by Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Its tulip-shaped, apricot-yellow flowers appear with the unfurling foliage at the end of April and last for several weeks. These are flushed pink on the outside of the tepals and have a fruity fragrance. 5m. USDA 5a-9b.

***Magnolia* x *brooklynensis* 'Yellow Bird'**
A fast-growing, pyramidal, small tree with cup-shaped, yellow flowers. These open progressively from late April, for about a month, at the same time as the foliage, and on opening have a slight greenish tinge to the base of the tepals. 7m. USDA 4a-8b.

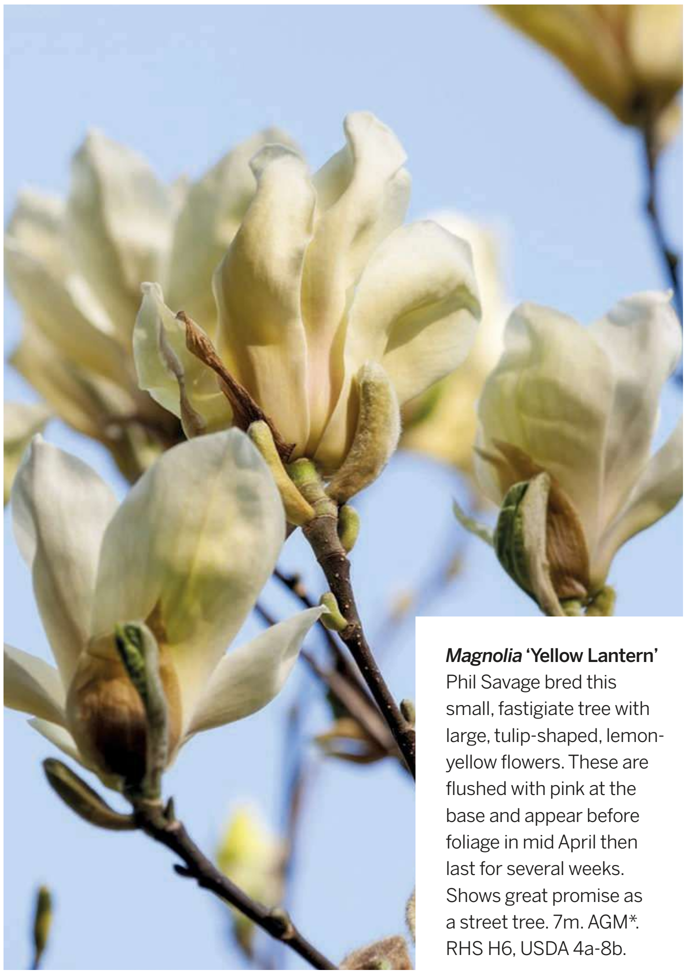
***Magnolia* 'Yellow Fever'**
A small tree with an upright habit. Its large, pale-yellow flowers are flushed pink and appear before the foliage during April. The flowers have a sweet fragrance and over time fade to an ivory-cream colour. A hybrid with *M. denudata*. 5m. USDA 4a-8b.

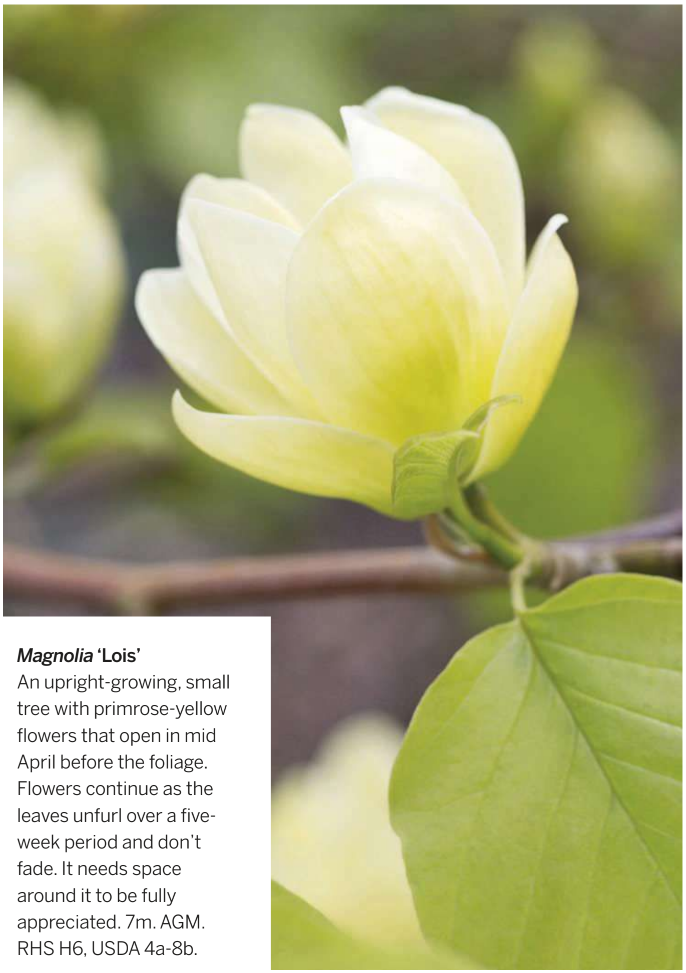
***Magnolia* 'Golden Pond'**
Raised in 1997 by David Leach in Ohio, this is a small, upright tree that is slow to establish but is eventually fast growing. It produces tulip-shaped, yellow flowers over several weeks both before and with the foliage during April. Needs a sunny site for best colour. 5m.





MAGNOLIA 'YELLOW FEVER' LUCY GRIFFITHS / GAP PHOTOS; *MAGNOLIA X BROOKLYNENSIS* 'YELLOW BIRD' VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS



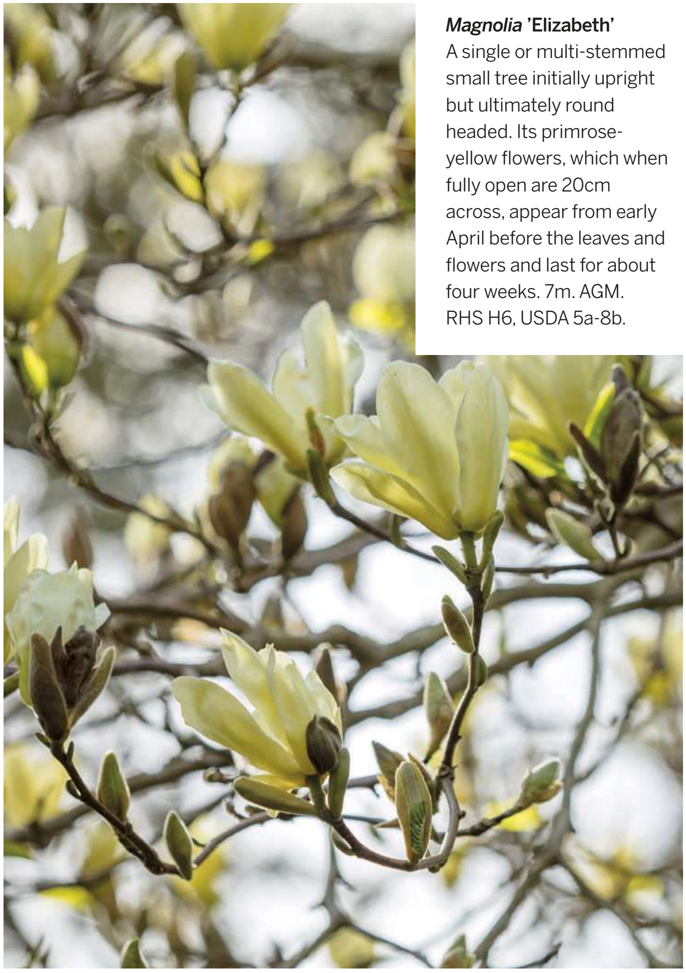


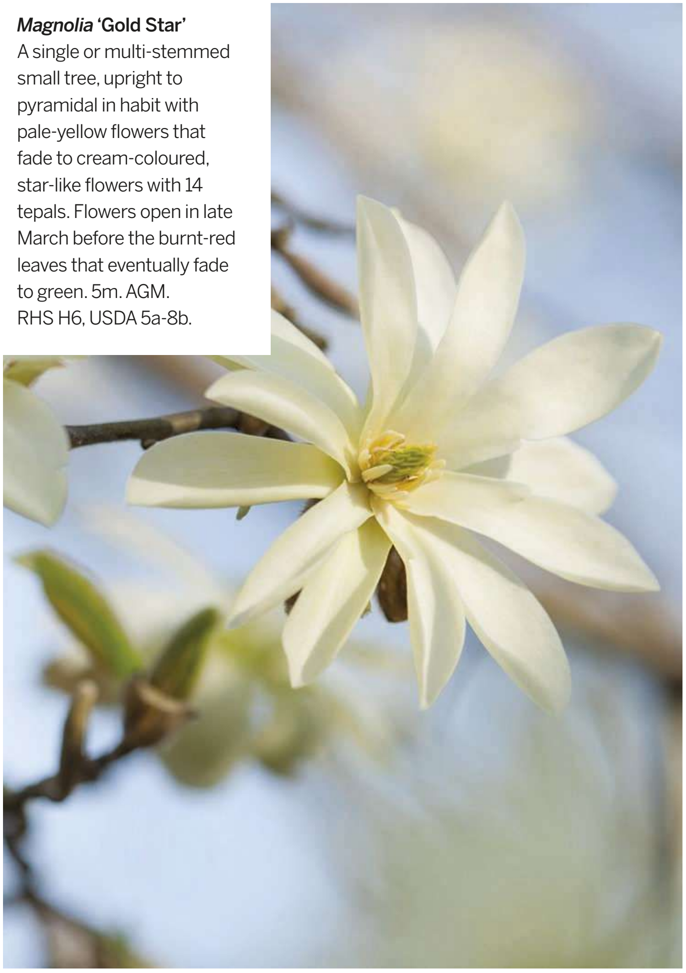
***Magnolia* 'Yellow Lantern'**
Phil Savage bred this small, fastigiate tree with large, tulip-shaped, lemon-yellow flowers. These are flushed with pink at the base and appear before foliage in mid April then last for several weeks. Shows great promise as a street tree. 7m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Magnolia* 'Elizabeth'**
A single or multi-stemmed small tree initially upright but ultimately round headed. Its primrose-yellow flowers, which when fully open are 20cm across, appear from early April before the leaves and flowers and last for about four weeks. 7m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

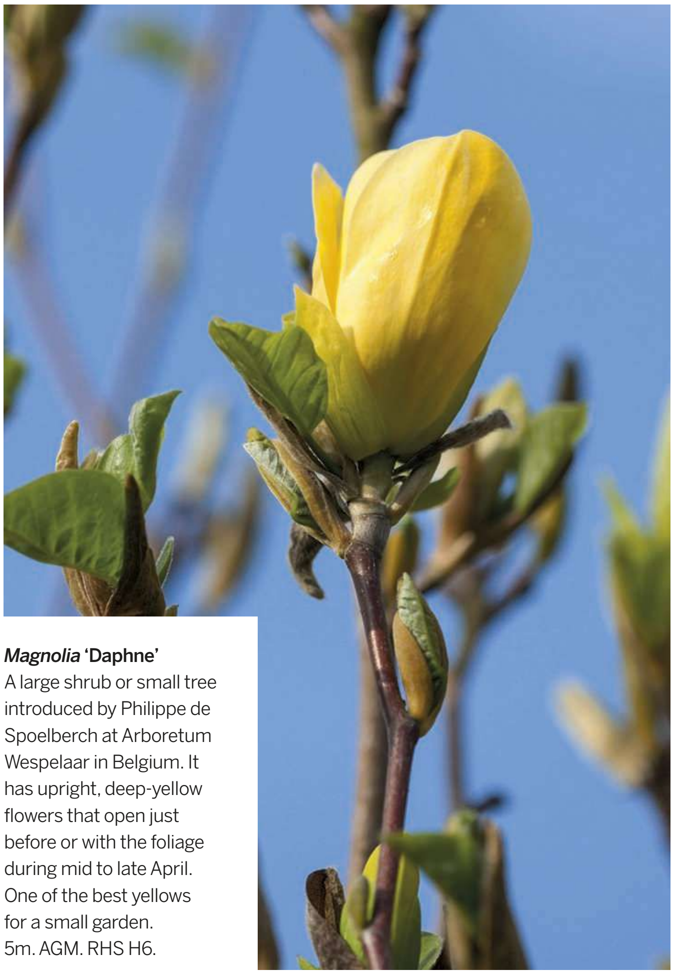
***Magnolia* 'Lois'**
An upright-growing, small tree with primrose-yellow flowers that open in mid April before the foliage. Flowers continue as the leaves unfurl over a five-week period and don't fade. It needs space around it to be fully appreciated. 7m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Magnolia* 'Gold Star'**
A single or multi-stemmed small tree, upright to pyramidal in habit with pale-yellow flowers that fade to cream-coloured, star-like flowers with 14 tepals. Flowers open in late March before the burnt-red leaves that eventually fade to green. 5m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

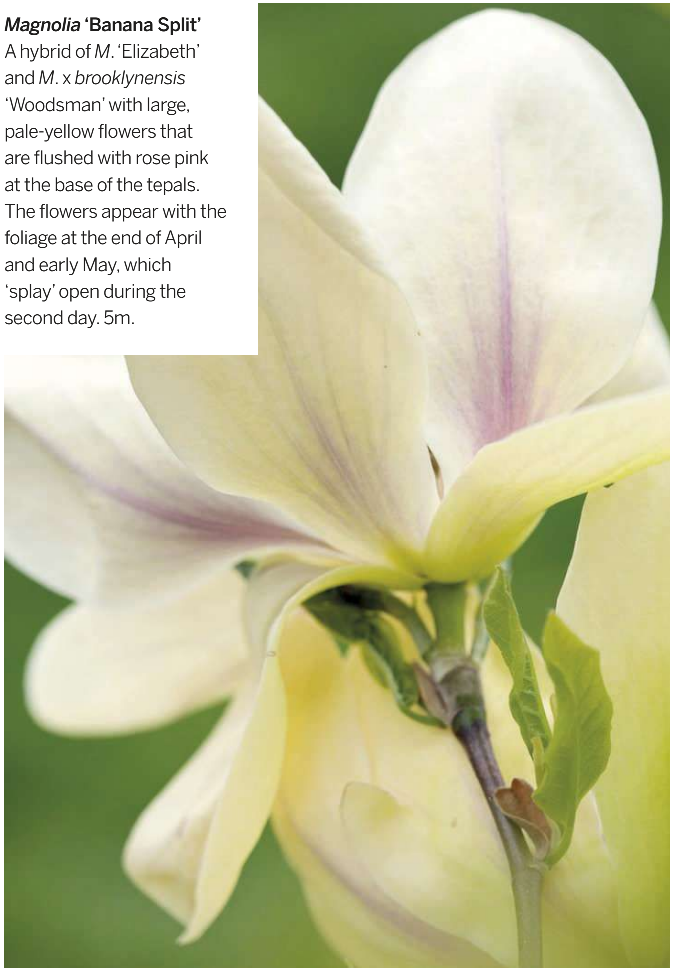




MAGNOLIA 'LOIS': RAY COX / GAP PHOTOS. MANY THANKS TO RHS GARDEN, WISLEY AND CAERHAYS CASTLE IN CORNWALL WHERE THE MAJORITY OF THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.



***Magnolia* 'Daphne'**
A large shrub or small tree introduced by Philippe de Spoelberch at Arboretum Wespelaar in Belgium. It has upright, deep-yellow flowers that open just before or with the foliage during mid to late April. One of the best yellows for a small garden. 5m. AGM. RHS H6.



***Magnolia* 'Banana Split'**
A hybrid of *M*. 'Elizabeth' and *M*. x *brooklynensis* 'Woodsman' with large, pale-yellow flowers that are flushed with rose pink at the base of the tepals. The flowers appear with the foliage at the end of April and early May, which 'splay' open during the second day. 5m.

Cultivation

Most of the magnolias you're likely to buy from a nursery or garden centre will have been grown as shrubs in five- to ten-litre pots, although you can find some trees and larger specimens in containers up to 20 litres in size. The majority of the hybrids for sale will have been budded or grafted and can be up to five years old when you buy them. The most important thing when choosing a tree is to look for a vigorous specimen that is showing evidence of new growth. This is a good sign that the tree hasn't become pot bound, which will make it easier to establish; pot-bound tree will take at least a year longer to establish.

Magnolias are best grown in a moisture-retentive, but not waterlogged, soil that can be either acidic or mildly alkaline. If you're planting into a heavy clay soil, then add some quarried grit and organic matter to open up the soil structure. The ideal time to plant your magnolia is in autumn while soil temperatures are high, but you can plant at most times of the year except during drought periods of high summer. Always water well during the first year to establish the tree. If you're planting a larger specimen or planting in an exposed location, use a low stake to secure the tree. Check the tree tie periodically and loosen if necessary and remove the stake after two to three years.

Magnolias have fleshy roots and are generally surface rooting, so don't plant too deep. If you're planning to plant your magnolia in a lawn, always prepare a generously wide planting pit and always make sure you add liberal amounts of organic matter, preferably leaf mould, into the top few inches. Mulch well after planting but never directly around the stem, and never add fertiliser until the second year as it will scorch the root tips and hamper development. Formative pruning on young plants is best done in late summer and autumn, while crown reduction on plants that are getting too large for their location is best done in spring. You may lose flowering for a season but depending on the size of the plant this can be carried out over two or three years.

Magnolias are comparatively free of damage from pests and disease. Slugs can strip a freshly planted young tree of its leaves, while rabbits and grey squirrels can gnaw away at young bark but they never quite kill it. Older plants that are under stress are more likely to be susceptible to honey fungus, *phytophthora*, or to *verticillium* wilt. Climatic issues, such as late frosts, can knock back young magnolias but they will generally regrow. Older plants that are in active growth in spring, followed by a late frost can suffer from a vertical split down the stem noticeably on the south side of the tree. This is known as frost crack, it looks severe but leave the plant alone to recover, which it generally will do. If you notice a yellowing of the foliage in the spring, especially after high or low temperatures, this is often the result of too much or too little fertiliser.

Where to see and buy

- **Arboretum Wespelaar**
  Grote Baan, 63-B 3150,
  Haacht-Wespelaar, Belgium.
  Tel +32 (0)1660 8641,
  arboretumwespelaar.be
- **Ashwood Nurseries**
  Ashwood Lower Lane,
  Ashwood, Kingswinford,
  West Midlands DY6 0AE.
  Tel 01384 401996,
  ashwoodnurseries.com
- **Borde Hill Garden,**
  Haywards Heath,
  West Sussex RH16 1XP.
  Tel 01444 450326,
  bordehill.co.uk
- **Burncoose Nurseries**
  Gwennap, Redruth,
  Cornwall TR16 6BJ.
  Tel 01209 860316,
  burncoose.co.uk
- **Caerhays Castle***
  Gorran, St Austell,
  Cornwall PL26 6LY.
  Tel 01872 501310,
  caerhays.co.uk
- **RHS Garden, Wisley**
  Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB.
  Tel 01483 224234,
  rhs.org.uk

* National Collection holder.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

FERNANDO CARUNCHO

For the world-renowned garden designer Fernando Caruncho, creating a successful garden is all about its *genius loci* and controlling the light

WORDS **STEPHANIE MAHON** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

Fernando Caruncho believes you know an authentic garden not when you see it, but when you feel it. “When you enter a real garden, time stops,” he says. “You know immediately that you are in a special place. You are transformed.” And he would know. The Spanish landscape designer is lauded for his gardens, which are often called minimalist and contemporary; harmonious and timeless.

Earlier this year, he was in London to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of Garden Designers, at a ceremony where the audience gave him a standing ovation. Despite this reverence, he insists, as did his hero ‘Capability’ Brown, that he is simply a gardener.

A city boy from Madrid, his passion for nature was kindled on summer visits to his grandfather’s house near Malaga. “That is my first memory of being in a garden, with the scent of jasmine, orange trees and myrtle. It had a real impact on me,” he says. His love of nature developed alongside his love of books, so it was no surprise when he decided to read philosophy at university. But after years of study, he abandoned his course to pursue landscape design.

“I learned that in the academies of the Ancient Greek philosophers, people took classes outside and spent time speaking and walking in the garden,” he says. “I began to understand that great people have a special relationship with nature, and it came to me that to understand the world, thought isn’t enough – you need action. To know, you need to be a gardener. This transformed my whole life.”

> TO UNDERSTAND THE WORLD, THOUGHT ISN’T ENOUGH – YOU NEED ACTION. TO KNOW, YOU NEED TO BE A GARDENER

Fernando is certainly a deep thinker – a conversation with him runs the gamut of references from Aristotle to Russell Page – but this is no cold intellectual. With face-creasing smiles and quiet raptures of delight, he is warm and kindly, eager to engage.

His gentle charm belies the character of his garden designs. These are places of order, intentional in every detail. His compositions feature clipped planting and mirror-like pools, often with grids of squares, circular motifs and strong vertical accents. But these elements, arranged with careful geometry, are present only to create a vessel to collect, reflect, refract and absorb Fernando’s most important material, his artist’s medium: the light. “To create gardens is to control the light,” he explains.

He has developed this ethos over four decades and almost 200 projects. He created his first garden aged just 21, when his uncle, the interior designer Paco Muñoz, entrusted him with the landscaping for his new house near Madrid, designed by architect Richard Neutra. The garden took two years and was inspired by the 17th-century gardens of Kyoto, with rocks and gravel, acers and clipped box. When a journalist from the French edition of *Vogue* visited to see the house, she was so impressed by the garden she ran a feature article on it that launched Fernando’s career.

This early success was followed by Mas Floris near Girona, a garden of ten acres with all the hallmarks of Fernando’s style – a pared-back palette of Mediterranean plants, a symmetrical layout and a reflecting pool to bring the sky down into the garden. The world of design really started to pay attention with the landscape at Mas de les Voltes, in Catalonia, where parterres of wheat were framed by olive trees and sentinels of cypress; and he confirmed his place in the pantheon of designers with Amastuola in Puglia, Italy, where he laid miles of espaliered grapevines in a pattern of undulating arcs, like waves in a sea of green.

He has gone on to work in France, the USA, New Zealand and the UK, but every project involves the same careful, considered process. To begin with, he visits the site several times to discover the spirit of the place, the *genius loci*. “When you approach a place for the first time, it is like meeting a person,” he says. “You have to spend some time with them, get to know them.”

Fernando also walks a lot in the surroundings outside the garden, as for him the key to a successful design is the synergy of the architecture of the house with the garden, and the garden with the wider landscape. He waits for the concept for the garden to reveal itself, like an impish muse: “The idea likes to play hide and seek with you.” Back at his studio, sketches are drawn, and detailed scale models constructed. These maquettes are topographically accurate miniscapes that are big enough for his associates to clamber around on as they experiment with the placement of elements.

Having turned 60 last year, Fernando feels it is now imperative to pass on what he knows to younger designers, especially his two latest recruits: his sons, Fernando and Pedro. “In these difficult times, we must ensure we transmit what we know to the next generation. It’s the history of gardening – people passing on the torch in a very big chain of knowledge over the centuries. This is so important, because knowledge is the key to discovering beauty,” he says, “and that should be the goal of all our lives.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Caruncho Garden & Architecture, Paseo de Narcea 17, Urbanización Ciudalcampo, San Sebastian de los Reyes, 28707 Madrid, Spain.
Tel +34 91 172 33 03, web.fernandocaruncho.com
NEXT MONTH Award-winning garden designer Cleve West.

ON THE MAP

Wyken Hall in Suffolk seems immune to the buffeting of passing years, but as its current custodian, Sir Kenneth Carlisle, explains part of the trick is blending the gardens with the ancient landscape

WORDS JODIE JONES PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM

IN BRIEF

Name Wyken Hall.
What Series of themed gardens wrapping around the house.
Where Suffolk.
Size Four-acre garden in 1,000-acre farm.
Soil Suffolk boulder clay (clay with nuggets of chalk).
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

The Elizabethan manor house at Wyken is partially enclosed by old flint walls, and completely enveloped in glorious gardens.

Deep in the heart of Suffolk, wrapped in a patchwork of fields, hedgerows and winding lanes, Wyken Hall has an air of timelessness.

This ancient estate was recorded in the Domesday Book and there is evidence of settlement on the land for over 6,000 years, but for the past 40 years or so it has been home to Sir Kenneth Carlisle and his wife Carla. Together they have enhanced the gardens around their manor house, transformed a disused barn into an award-winning restaurant and shop, and planted a highly regarded vineyard.

What or who has inspired you to garden?
My grandfather [Lord Aberconway] was President of the RHS in the 1940s and created the gardens at Bodnant in Wales, where I was born, so I grew up surrounded by excellent horticulture.

How did you begin the garden here, and who inspired the way the garden has evolved?
My grandfather inherited the Wyken estate and I began farming here in 1973. We are surrounded by lovely woods, and I was very interested in wildflowers, but didn't start gardening until 1979. I was persuaded by a friend that I should have lots of old rose cultivars, so I bought them all, and that is how the Rose Garden took shape. I also began the Winter Garden at the front of the house around that time.

[The landscape designer] Arabella Lennox-Boyd is a family friend and during a weekend visit in 1983 she drew up plans for the Herb Garden, Knot Garden and Rose Garden improvements, running along the back of the house. I followed all her recommendations, and so it is her designs that form the foundation of these gardens today.

Carla has an artistic eye for colour and she has great influence on the evolving design.

How much help do you have in the garden?
When I took over the estate, we already had a gardener called John Mann, who had been working here since 1956. Now, 62 years later, he still comes in one day a week. Our head gardener is Rob Kett, who runs the gardens with one other full-time gardener and another who comes in for five hours a week. We owe a lot to this amazing team.

What challenges have you faced?
Early on I planted a leylandii hedge that was removed very quickly when I realised what I had done. The important thing is to learn when things go wrong. And we had the great privilege of knowing that we were going to be here for years and years so there was no great rush, which is often when mistakes occur. If you do one or two projects a year, the impact becomes quite significant after 20 years. Although taking the long view can also be an issue. I planted a coastal redwood in 1970, which is now really quite large. Thankfully, I won't be around when it gets so big that it becomes a problem.

How straightforward was it to garden sympathetically with an historic property?
The basic structure of the garden is built around the flint walls and fine old trees, which were here when I moved in. And, of course, there are the views from inside the house. A case in point is the pleached stilt hedge on the front terrace, which is unusually high to avoid blocking the view through the ground-floor windows.

But with a site like this, the trick is to manage the transition from formal areas near the house out into the ancient landscape. The garden must relate to the architecture but also to the surrounding fields and woodlands. Many of our garden areas are designed to frame a vista. To keep the wider views open, we put in a ha-ha. Essentially, this is a deep ditch with a fence at the bottom. It was done with a digger in less than a day, keeping the costs down, and means we can enjoy looking at the sheep grazing in the field beyond without them wandering into the garden.

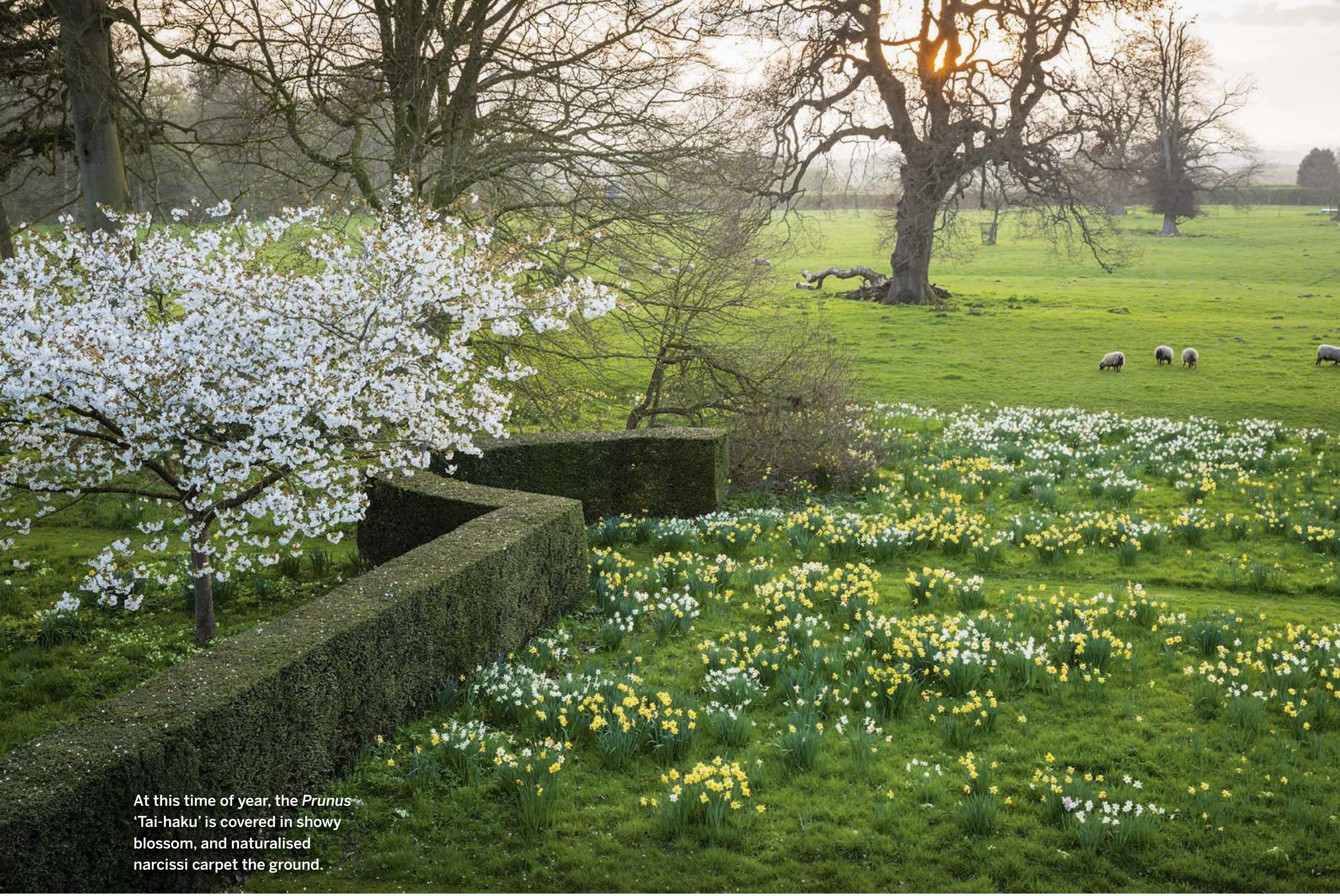
What are the garden's seasonal highlights?
A long season of interest is important for our own enjoyment, but also because we open the gardens to the public from the beginning of April until the end of September. We start early, with a wonderful display of snake's head fritillaries in the wildflower meadow. Then the orchard is full of blossom. By late May, the Rose Garden is really coming into its own, and we put in the Red Hot Border, full of dahlias, kniphofias, and all sorts of strong colours, to keep the interest going through August and on into September.

Has opening your garden to the public influenced the way you have developed it?
We have always grown vegetables here, but they were rather scattered about, so we decided to make a dedicated Kitchen Garden because it is very attractive and popular with the visitors. As well as the timber raised beds, we have 20 different types of espaliered apples, all traditional varieties. □

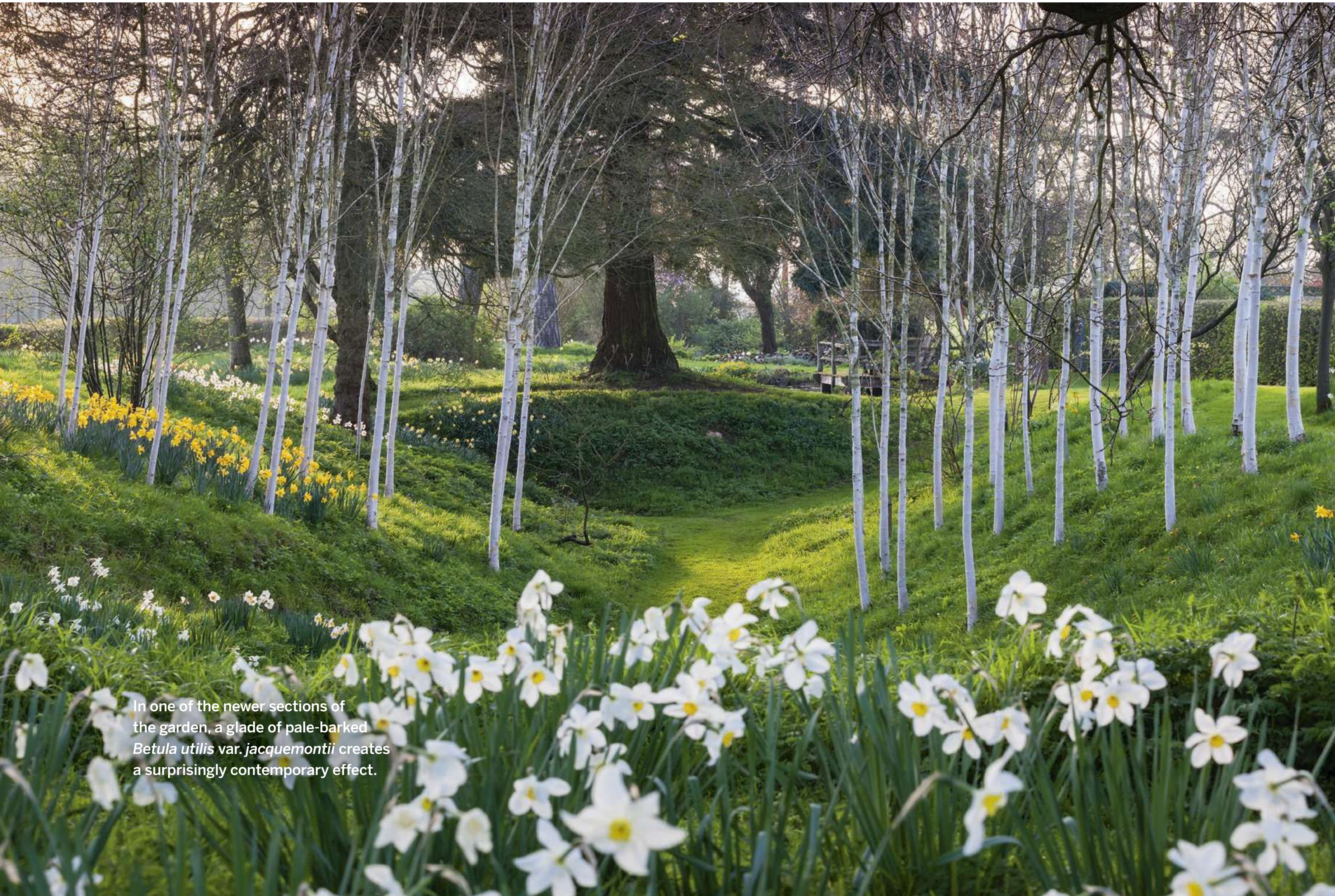
THE GARDEN MUST RELATE TO THE SURROUNDINGS. MANY AREAS ARE DESIGNED TO FRAME A VISTA

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Wyken Hall Gardens, Wyken Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 2DW.
Tel 01359 250287. **Web** wykenvineyards.co.uk
Open 26 March to 30 September, daily except Saturdays, 2pm-6pm, admission £5 (children free).



At this time of year, the *Prunus* 'Tai-haku' is covered in showy blossom, and naturalised narcissi carpet the ground.

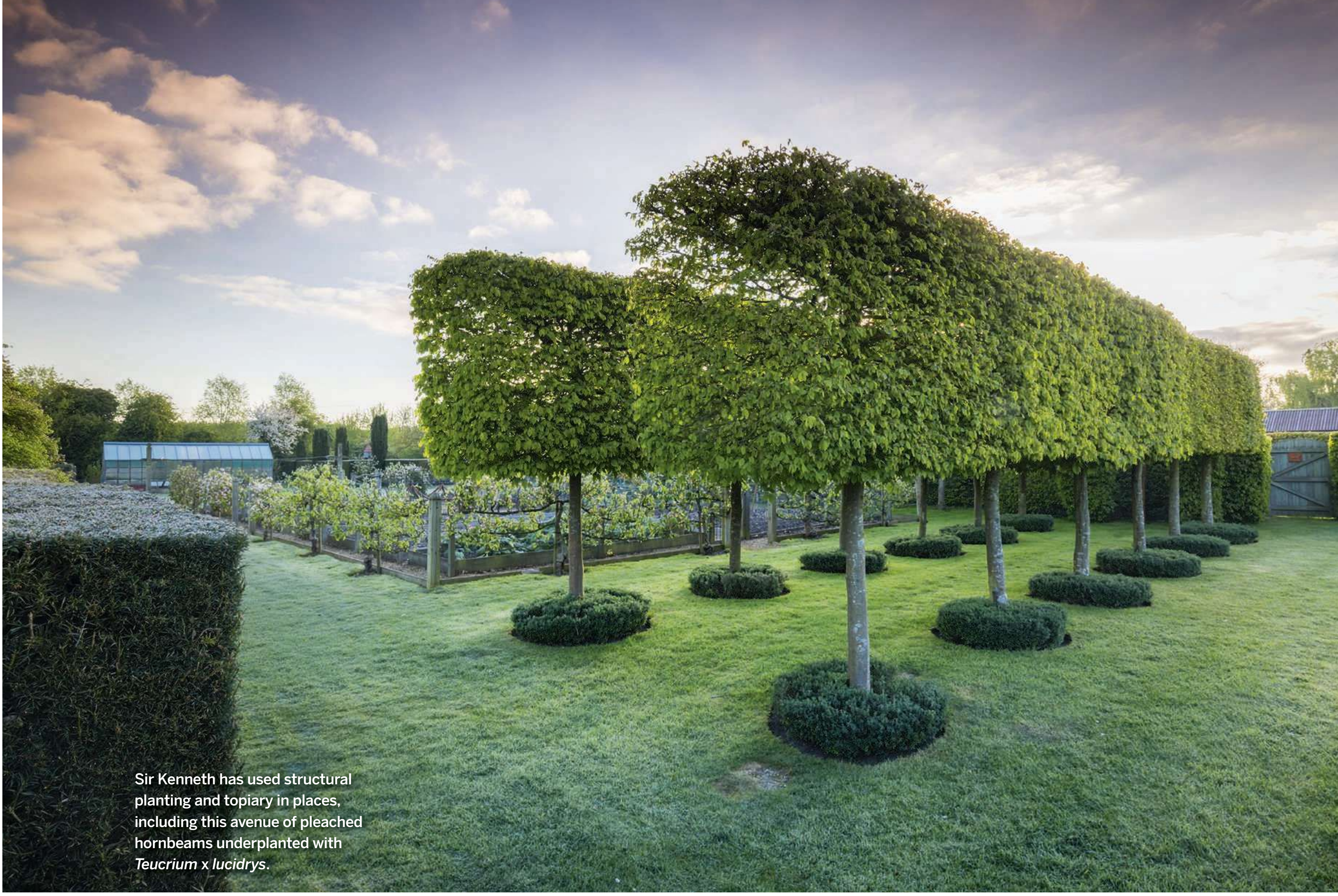


In one of the newer sections of the garden, a glade of pale-barked *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* creates a surprisingly contemporary effect.

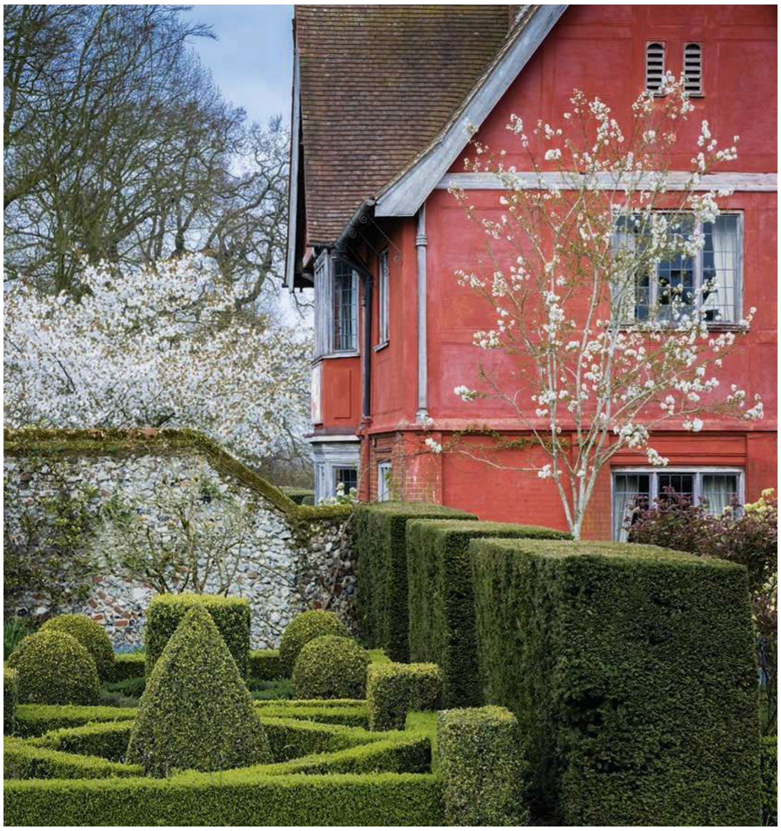
The Red Hot Border was created to provide late-summer interest, but, studded with orange tulips and lime-green euphorbia, it is already beautiful in spring.

WE DECIDED TO MAKE A DEDICATED KITCHEN GARDEN BECAUSE IT IS VERY ATTRACTIVE AND POPULAR WITH VISITORS

The Kitchen Garden is enclosed by a boundary of espaliered heritage apples, to make a beautiful and productive enclosure.



Sir Kenneth has used structural planting and topiary in places, including this avenue of pleached hornbeams underplanted with *Teucrium* x *lucidrys*.

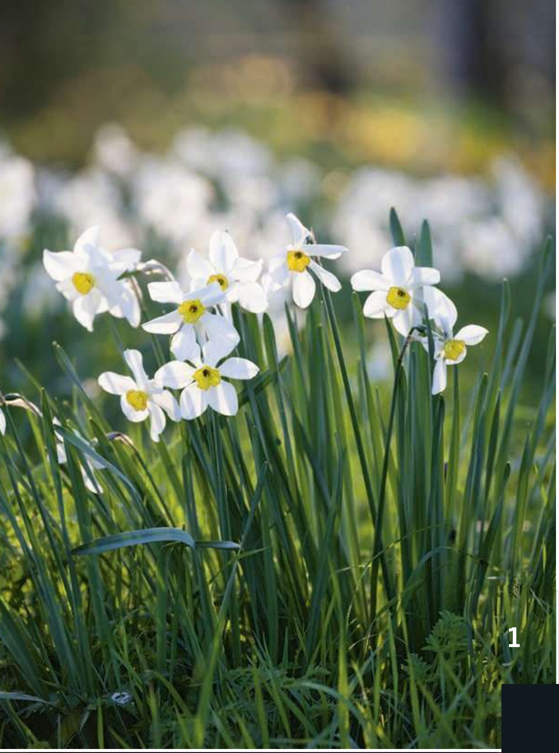


STRUCTURAL PLANTING

Structure is an integral part of Wyken Hall's design, which for Sir Kenneth means varied hedging

"We have a lot of hedges at Wyken Hall and they do add greatly to the year-round structure of the gardens. I find the greatest challenge is to stop them getting too big. In particular, they can get very wide before you have really noticed. It is, of course, important to select plants suited to your site. We have a hornbeam avenue underplanted with *Teucrium* x *lucidrys* (a very good plant to use if you have suffered from box blight), which is based on one at the National Trust garden in Hidcote, Gloucestershire, that I always rather coveted. Fortunately, hornbeam does very well on our heavy soil. It went in around 2000, to give us a vista from the house down to the Red Hot Border, and grows so vigorously that we cut it twice a year, first in June and again in October.

"I always advise people that yew makes the best hedge, but we also have a maze that was planted in copper beech. When half the beech died, we replaced it with hornbeam, which makes a nice mixture. My mother used to love making mazes – she would draw them in the sand on the beach for us when we were children – and she designed this one just before she died, so we made it in her memory."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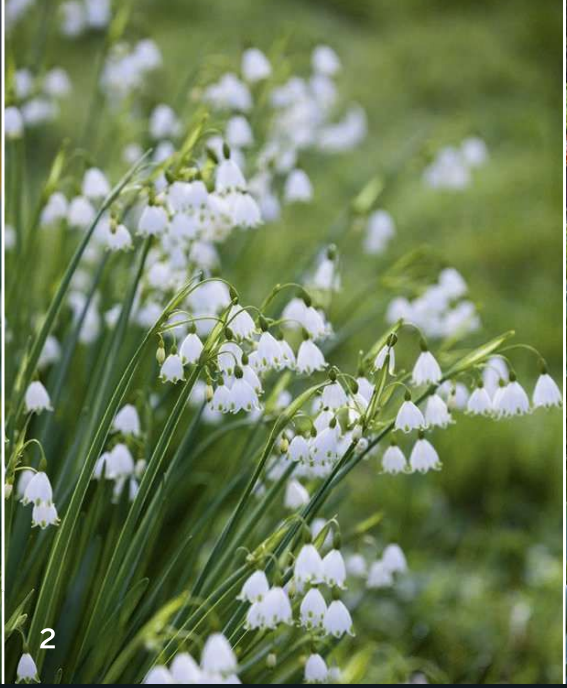
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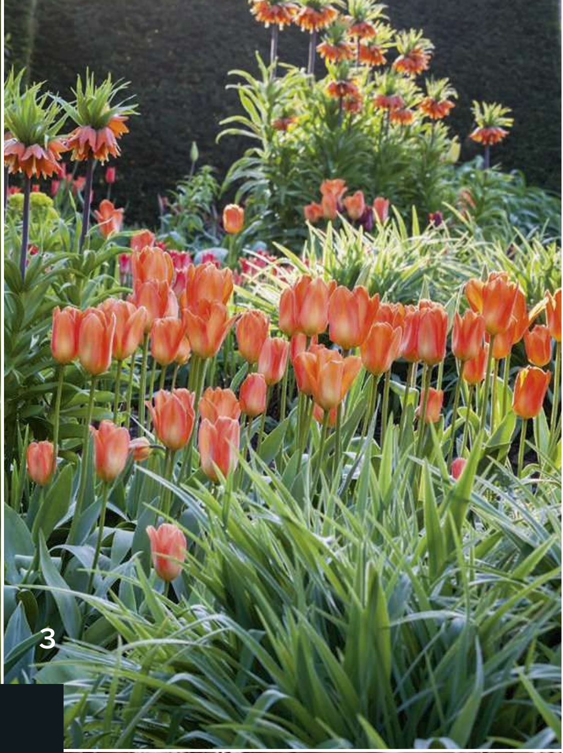
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NINE KEY PLANTS

1 *Narcissus* 'White Lady'
A sweetly scented, white daffodil with a small yellow cup. Bred in the 1890s, it is a favourite of Sir Kenneth's. 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b[†].

2 *Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye Giant'
A large *Leucojum* that forms an impressive clump, flowers early and goes on for two months. 45cm. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Tulipa* 'Orange Emperor'
A tulip that is great as a cut flower, although at Wyken Hall it's planted en masse and left in the ground. 45cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

4 *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Aurora'
These rich-orange crown imperials add an early burst of colour to Wyken Hall's Red Hot Border. 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

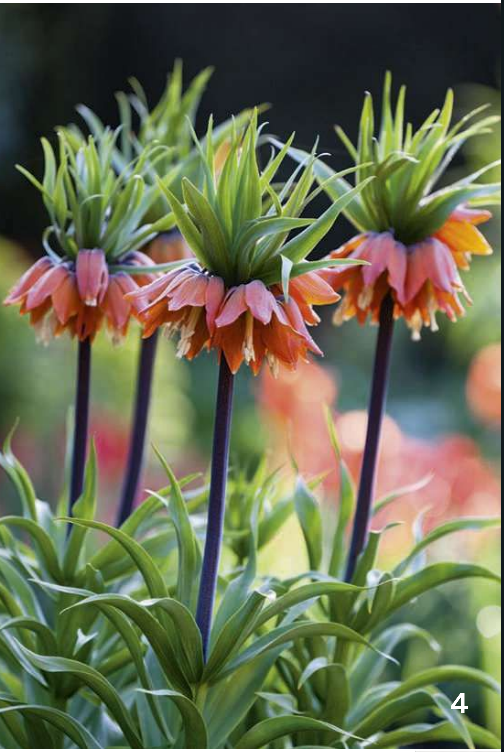
5 *Amelanchier lamarckii*
One of Sir Kenneth's favourite small trees. The new foliage emerges with a bronze tint at the same time as the flowers, and it produces plenty of good berries later on. 10m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

6 *Viburnum* 'Eskimo'
This viburnum forms a wonderful low standard, smothered in blossom in spring. 1.5m. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

7 *Staphylea colchica*
In spring this ornamental shrub, commonly known as bladdernut, produces beautiful fragrant blooms. 3.5m. RHS H5, USDA 6a-7b.

8 *Fritillaria meleagris*
Snake's head fritillaries took years to seed in Wyken Hall's damp clay, but have now naturalised extensively. 30cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

9 *Prunus* 'Tai-haku'
This small grove of seven cherries planted close to the house is a great feature in spring. Sir Kenneth loves their whiteness and purity. 10m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.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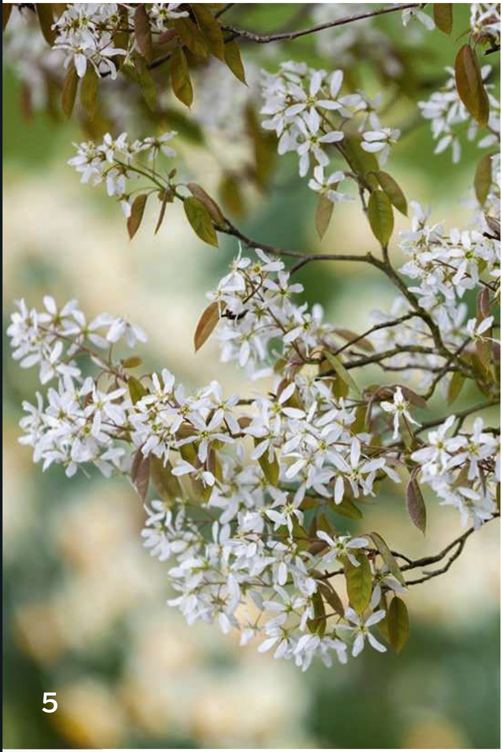
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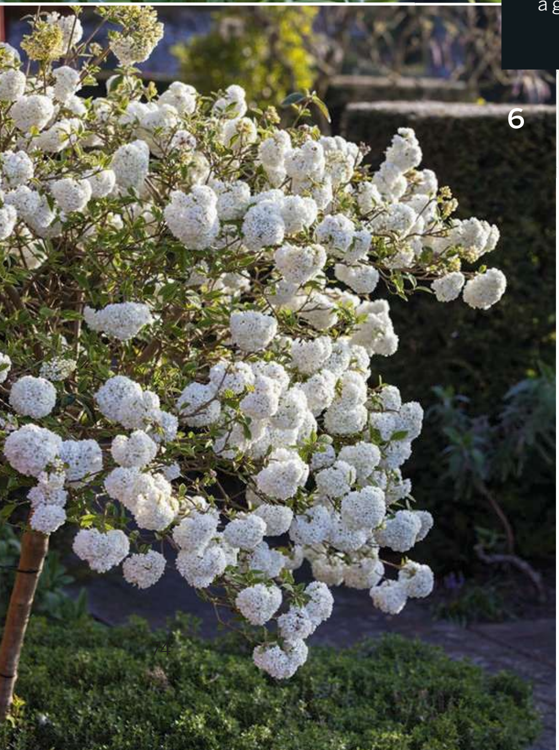
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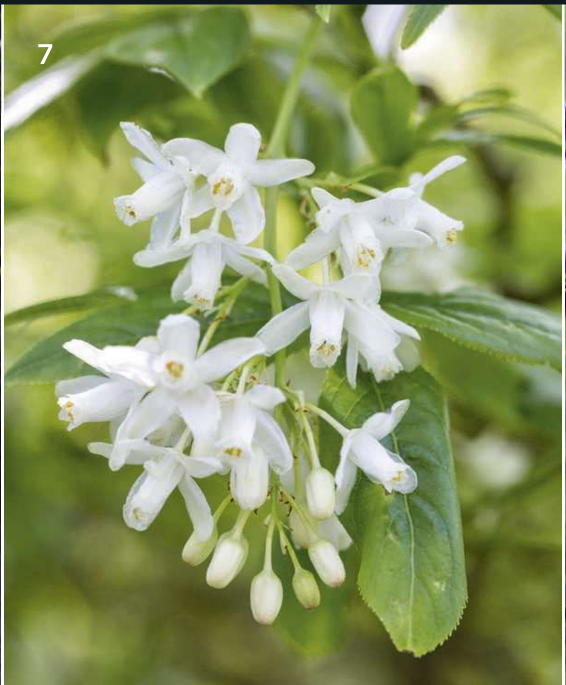
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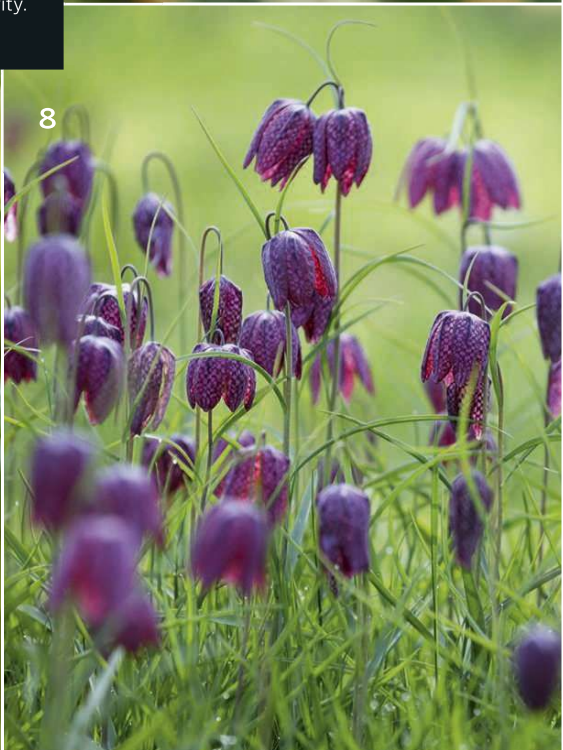
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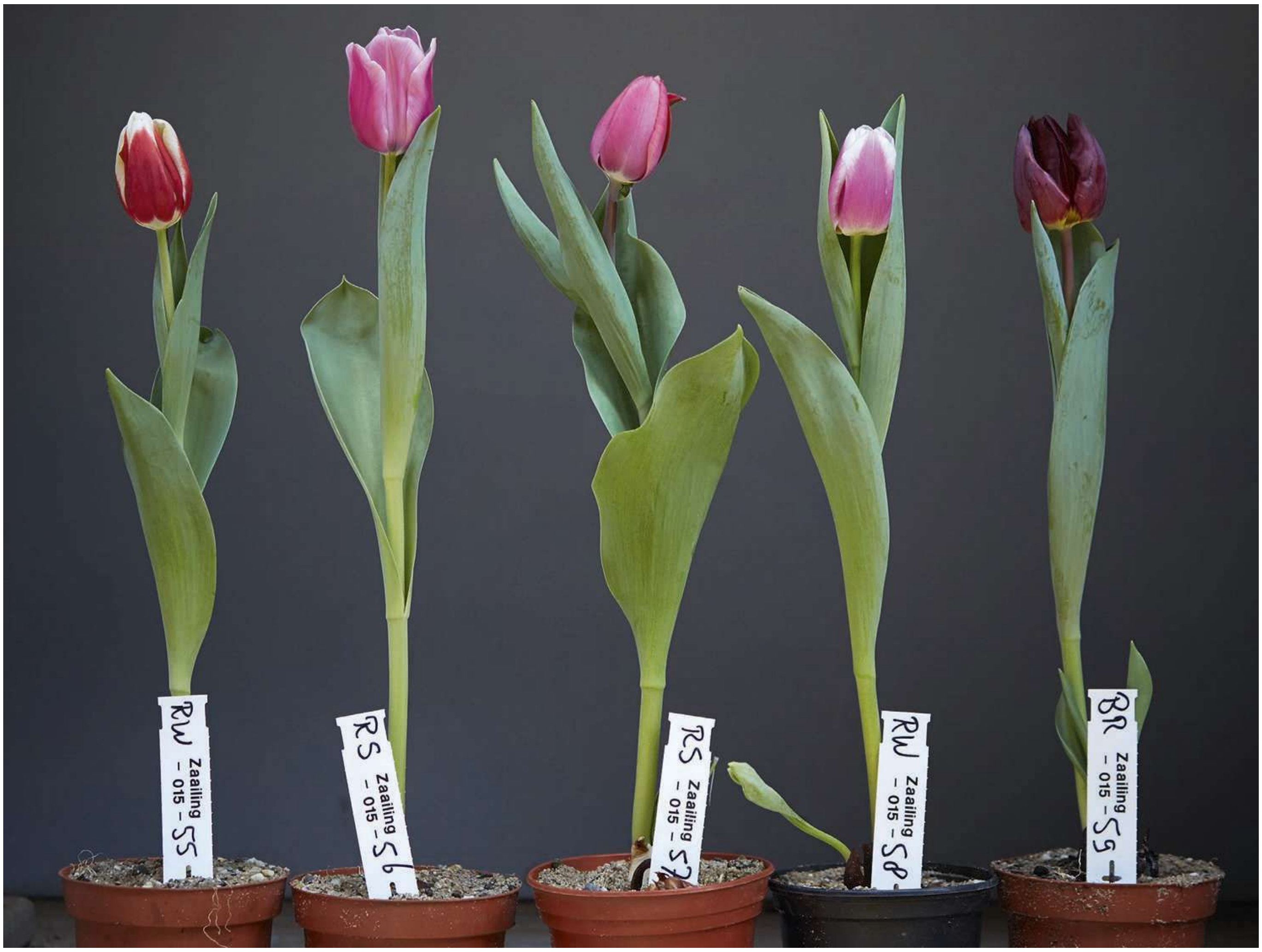
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



Above
Seedlings are given a code and number until Jan is convinced they are good cultivars and ready to go to market.

Facing page
Roughly 12 acres of Jan's farm are used as trial beds where new cultivars are put through their paces.

Tulips have a long association with the Netherlands. The botanist Carolus Clusius planted the country's first tulip bulbs – brought from Turkey by the Flemish ambassador – in Leiden's Hortus Botanicus as far back as 1593. Throughout the 17th century the bulbs' popularity grew, famously reaching a peak during the 'tulip mania' of the 1630s when a single tulip bulb could change hands for the price of a canal house in Amsterdam. When the bubble inevitably burst in 1637, tulips fell out of favour until commercial growing took hold again in the early 19th century.

In the 17th century tulip growing was centred on the coastal areas near Haarlem, but today most large-scale growers are based in the northern province of Noord-Holland. Much of the province is made up of a wide, flat peninsula, that stretches up from Amsterdam. Bordered on one side by the North Sea and on the other by the inland bay of the IJsselmeer, it is just that little bit cooler than the rest of the Netherlands, which according to commercial grower Jan Ligthart is what makes the area ideal for growing tulips. "The sea wind keeps insects away and the soil is well drained," he adds.

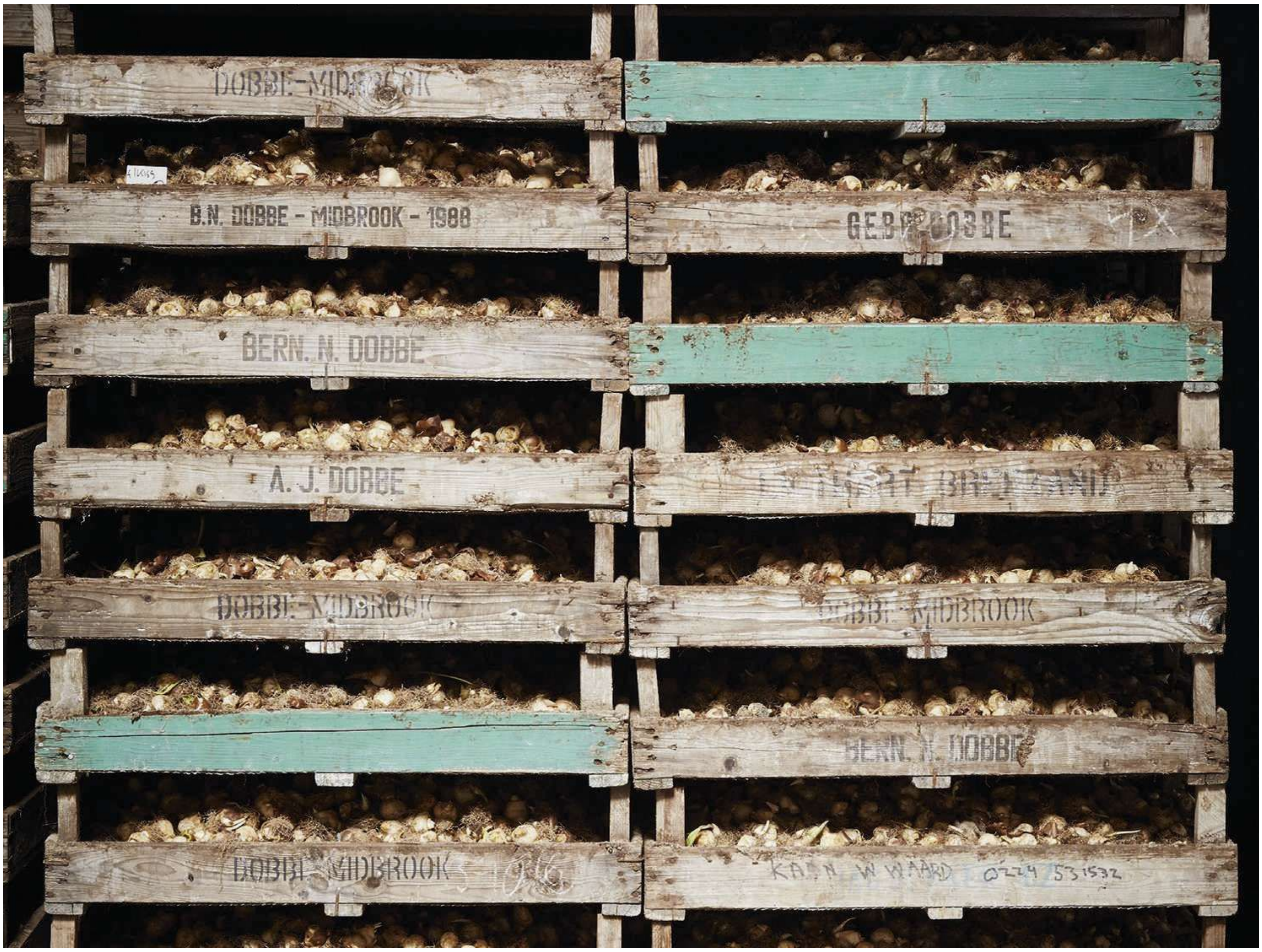
Jan who runs the commercial growing business Ligthart Bloembollen has been breeding tulips since his teens. "Forty years ago I was the youngest ever contributor at the Westfriese Flora – the largest indoor bulb exhibition in the world," he says. Surprisingly then, he's a first-generation grower, who had planned to follow his father into carpentry before a weekend job at a neighbouring tulip bulb grower got him hooked. "I love tulips because of their incredible variety in shape and colour," he says. "Some are also fragrant. Most orange cultivars carry a scent, but some yellow ones do too. 'Crème Upstar', also known as 'Peach Melba', is one of the best-known fragrant tulips, but 'Granny Award', 'Ballerina', 'Givenchy' and 'Prins Willem Alexander' are all scented." The latter two are also both cultivars Jan has bred.

They're among more than 3,000 cultivars Jan currently grows in at Ligthart Bloembollen. Although it is very much a family business – Jan's wife, daughter and two of his sons all work with him – Ligthart Bloembollen grows bulbs on a vast scale. The tulip fields cover an area of roughly 70 acres and it can take half an hour to drive to the outer beds from Jan's home. Some of the bulbs are grown in sandy soil, while others are grown in clay, which Jan says is better for the bulbs but is harder to work so he reserves the clay plots for the bigger bulbs that can be planted and harvested ▷

TEST BEDS

The tulip fields of Noord-Holland are where many new cultivars are developed and trialled before they reach bulb suppliers – a process that can take up to 15 years

WORDS MARIEKE VAN GESSEL PHOTOGRAPHS SABRINA ROTHE



Above
Bulbs that have formed offsets are split and the offsets laid out in crates in Jan's greenhouse before being planted out in autumn.

Facing page
Clockwise from top left

Jan examines one of his parrot tulips 'Night Glow', which starts out green-yellow before becoming increasingly pink.

Harvested seeds are planted in sand and left to develop into tiny bulbs.

Seedlings of new cultivars growing in Jan's trial beds.

Year-old seedlings, which look like tiny haulms of grass, are moved out of the greenhouse before they are planted.

▷ mechanically and uses the sandy plots for the smaller bulbs that he plants and harvests by hand. As tulip bulbs can only be grown in the same spot for four consecutive years, Jan rents out plots to daffodil and hyacinth growers for four years before returning to tulips.

Many of the cultivars Jan grows are ones he's bred himself, a process that can take upwards of 15 years and which begins by adding the pollen from one tulip to the pistil of another cultivar. Jan then harvests the poppy-like seedheads that develop from midsummer onwards and dries these in sheds, before sowing the seeds in containers in autumn, and then carefully removing the tiny bulbs these develop into the following summer. "Sometimes you only get one little bulb from a hundred seeds," he says. "I plant them out and wait for five years until they produce their first flowers. It takes another ten years to propagate and test them. I look at the shape and position of the leaves, the colour and longevity of the flower, if it is prone to diseases, and so on. And then it takes another ten years to have a sufficient number of bulbs to go to auction."

To date, Jan's most commercially successful tulip has been 'Strong Gold', which he bred when he was just 20. Since then he has created more than 250 new cultivars. Some have been named after famous people, such as Vivienne Westwood and Katie Melua. "The flamboyant orange and purple tulip 'Vivienne Westwood' really suits her," says Jan. "I was asked to breed a tulip for her by the Dutch embassy in London, because of Dame Vivienne's love of Dutch master paintings." But you don't have to be famous to give your name to one of Jan's tulips. Jan offers a naming service that allows individuals and companies to have a tulip named in their honour for €2,500. Which really doesn't sound that expensive, considering the time and effort that goes into breeding each one. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Although Ligthart Bloembollen is a wholesale supplier you can order a selection of its bulbs directly at **ligthartbloembollen.nl** or in the UK at:

- **Jacques Amand**
  The Nurseries, Clamp Hill,
  Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 3JS.
  Tel 020 8420 7110, jacquesamandintl.com
- **Taylor & Sons Bulbs**
  Washway House Farm, Holbeach,
  Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 7PP.
  Tel 01406 422266, taylors-bulbs.com

Turn the page for 12 of Jan's recommended tulips

P
BL
BC
R
RS
W
P

DORP

A1 type

Rows and rows of tulips stand out against the flat fields of the Noord-Holland countryside.

Many of Jan's tulips, including the *T.* 'Copex' he is holding above, are already on the market. Some of the other recommendations shown here are ones he is still developing, so names are provisional.

12 OF JAN'S RECOMMENDED TULIPS

1 *Tulipa* crystal pink†*
A crispa tulip, with fringed petals, that is still in the development stage. Flowers May. 40cm.

2 *T.* 'Vovos'†
A parrot tulip, named for a local bird society, that is copper coloured with a hint of blue. A cross between 'Malaika' and 'Blue Parrot'. Flowers May. 30cm.

3 *T.* parrot crystal†*
Another new cross between a crispa and parrot tulip. Flowers May. 30cm.

4 *T.* yellow tango†*
A Triumph tulip with 'Shirley' as one of its ancestors. Flowers from late April. 45cm.

5 *T.* 'Flaming Agrass'†
A mutant of the well-known 'Agrass White'. A strong Triumph tulip. Flowers from mid May. 45cm.

6 *T.* cream double lily*
Jan is propagating this new cultivar for Japanese growers. It's the only double lily tulip that produces multiple flowers on one stem. Flowers mid May. 45cm.

7 *T.* 'Wyndham'†
The only double purple and white Triumph tulip, named after the town in New Zealand where one of Jan's daughters lives. Flowers May. 40cm.

8 *T.* 'Heleen Valstar'†
An elegant red tulip Jan has named for a Dutch company. Flowers May. 50cm.

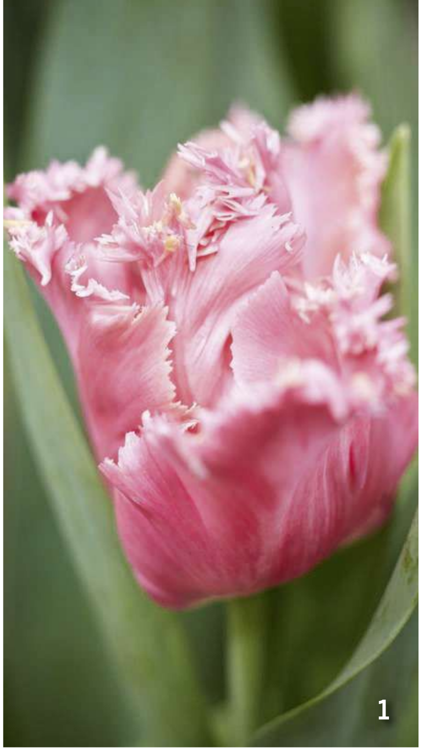
9 *T.* 'Bad Woerishofen'†
Late-flowering and extremely fragrant, orange-red tulip created in honour of the annual tulip festival in this German spa town. Flowers May. 40cm.

10 *T.* 'Blue Parrot'
A lovely parrot tulip, introduced in the 1930s. Flowers from mid May. 50cm.

11 *T.* 'Copex'†
A Triumph tulip name after the Dutch international cargo transport company. Very strong. Flowers from late April. 30cm.

12 *T.* 'Continental'†
An almost-black, Triumph tulip, named for the German car tyre manufacturer. Flowers are double the size of those of 'Queen of Night'. Flowers May. 45cm.

†Tulips bred by Jan. *As yet unnamed tulips still at the development stage.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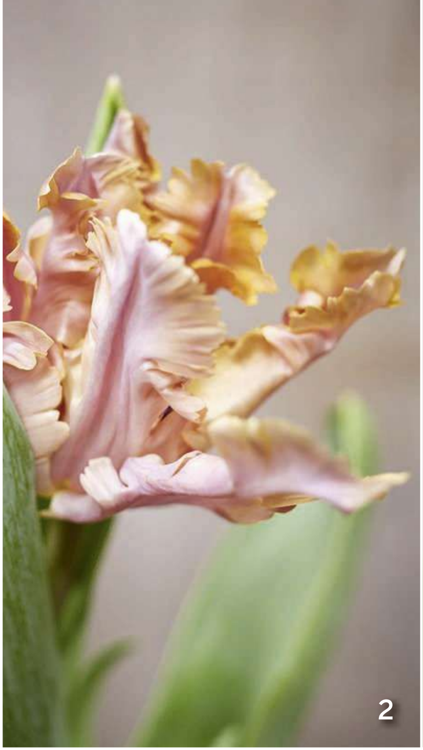
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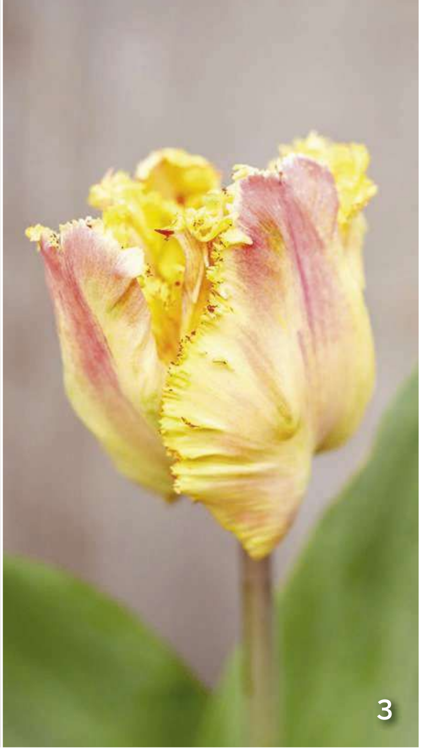
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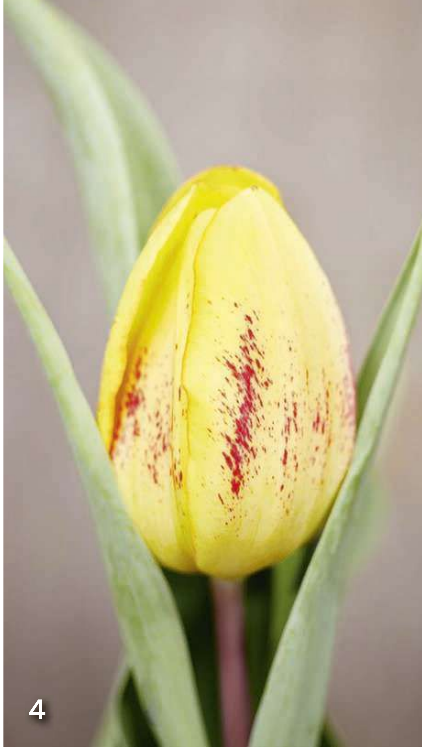
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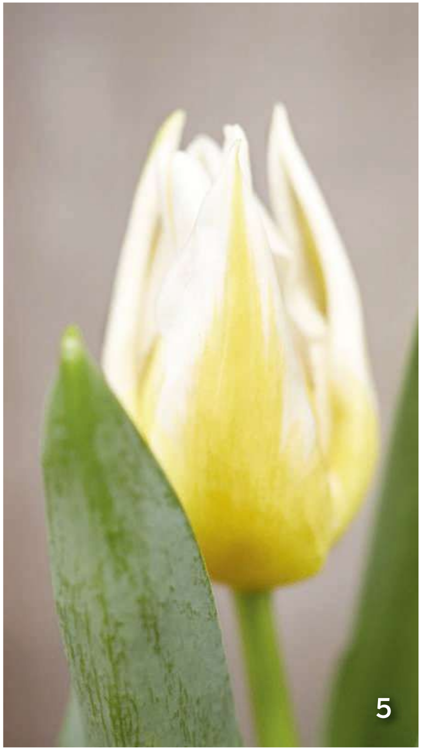
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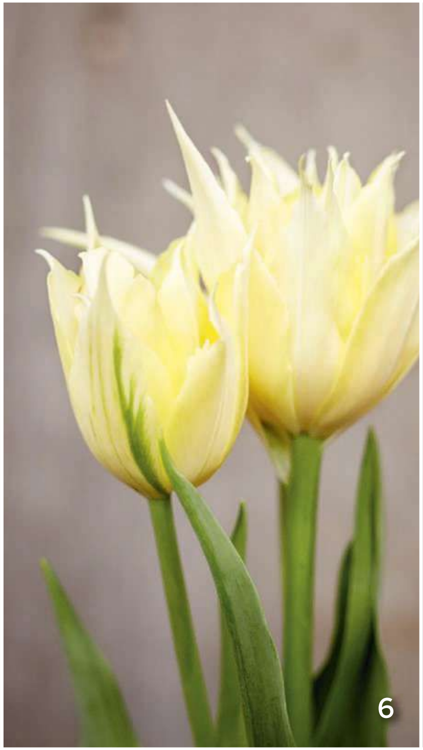
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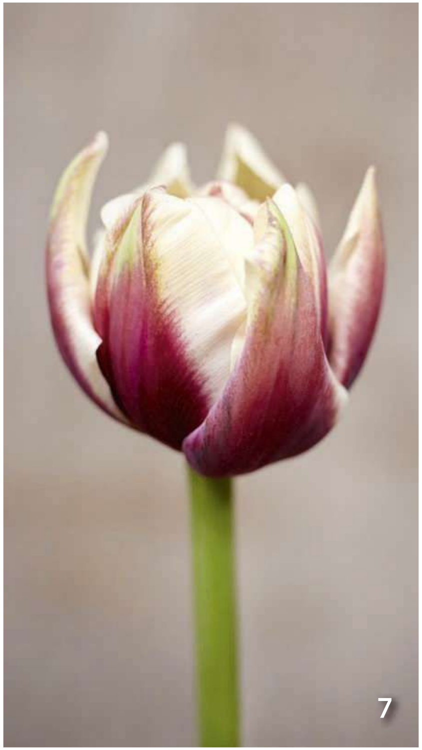
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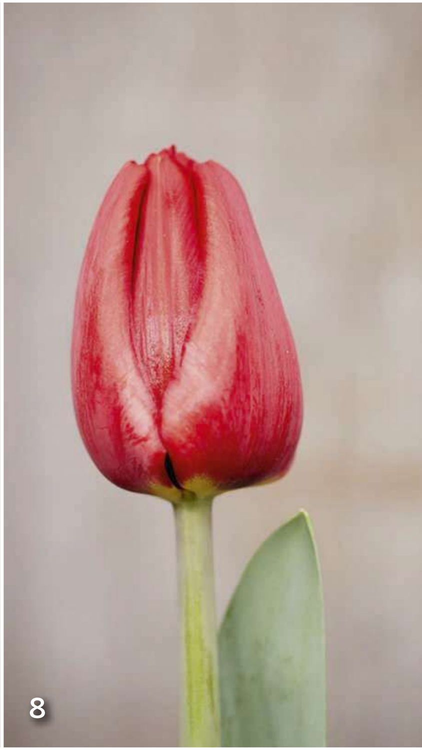
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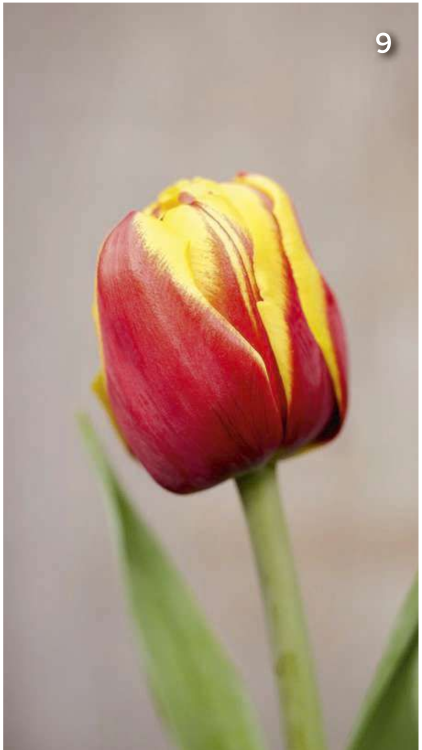
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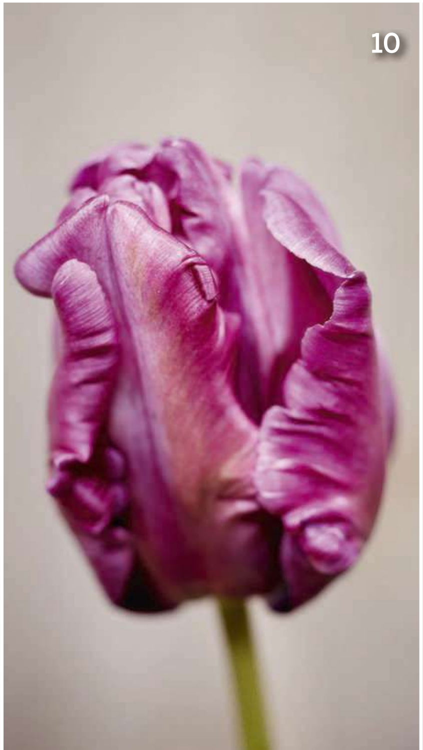
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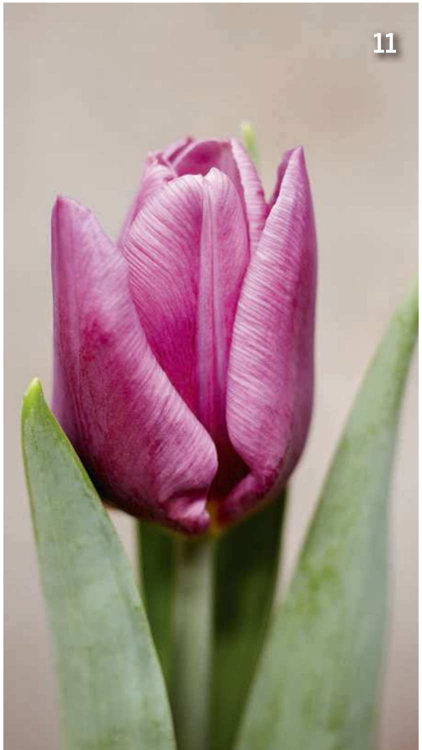
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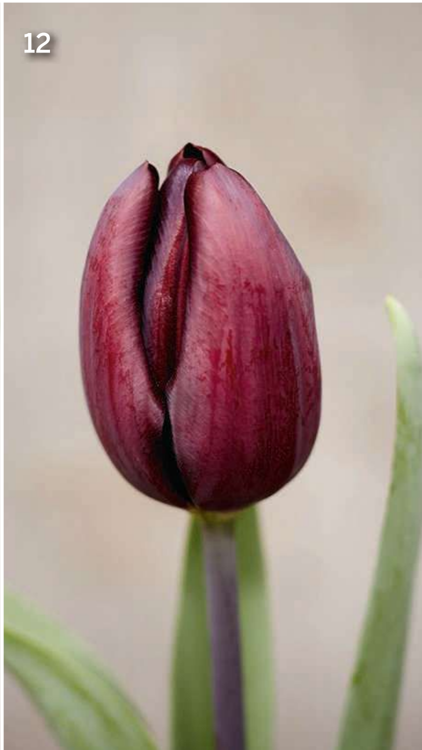
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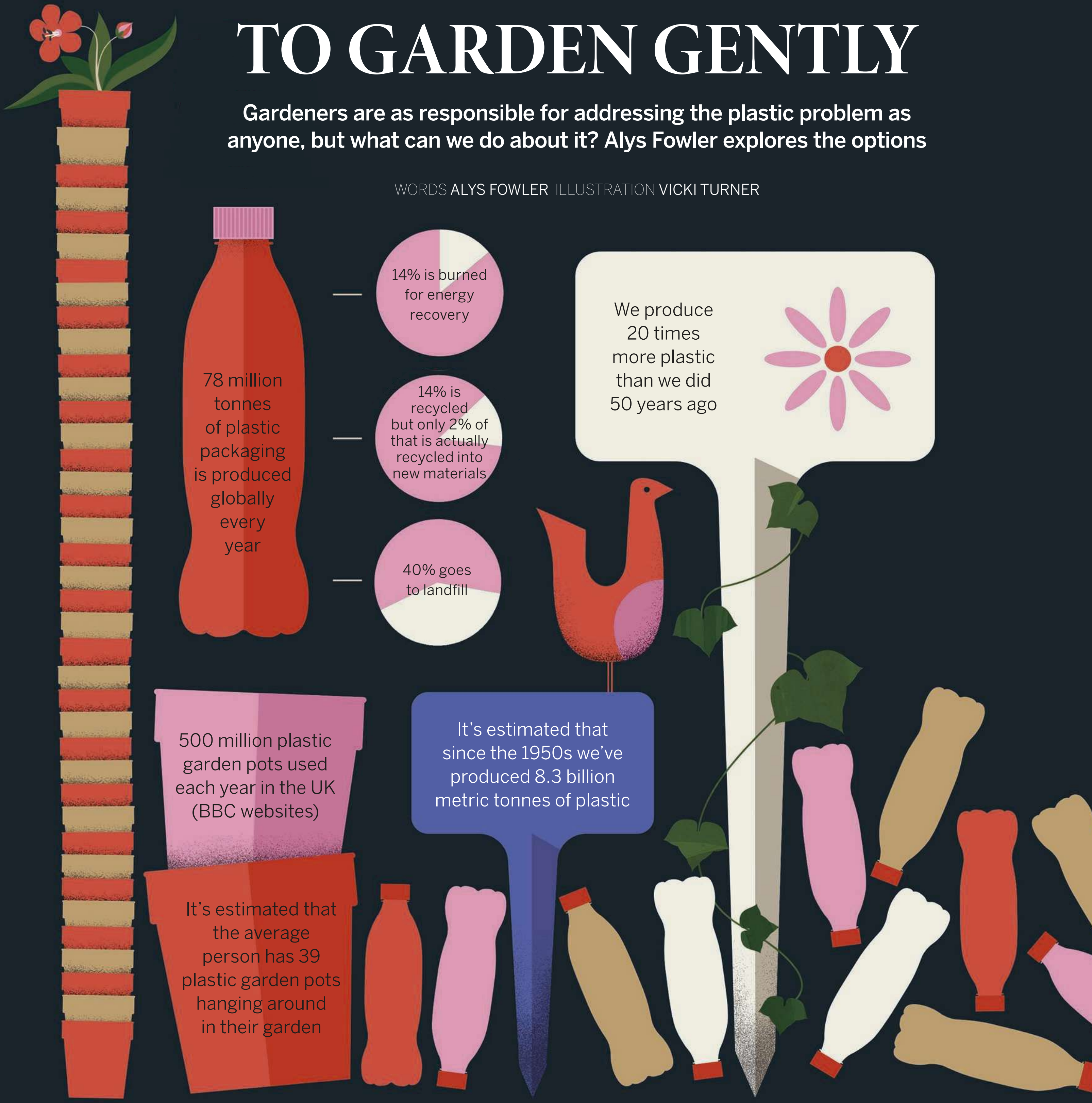
TO GARDEN GENTLY

Gardeners are as responsible for addressing the plastic problem as anyone, but what can we do about it? Alys Fowler explores the options

WORDS **ALYS FOWLER** ILLUSTRATION **VICKI TURNER**



78 million tonnes of plastic packaging is produced globally every year

14% is burned for energy recovery

14% is recycled but only 2% of that is actually recycled into new materials

40% goes to landfill

We produce 20 times more plastic than we did 50 years ago

500 million plastic garden pots used each year in the UK (BBC websites)

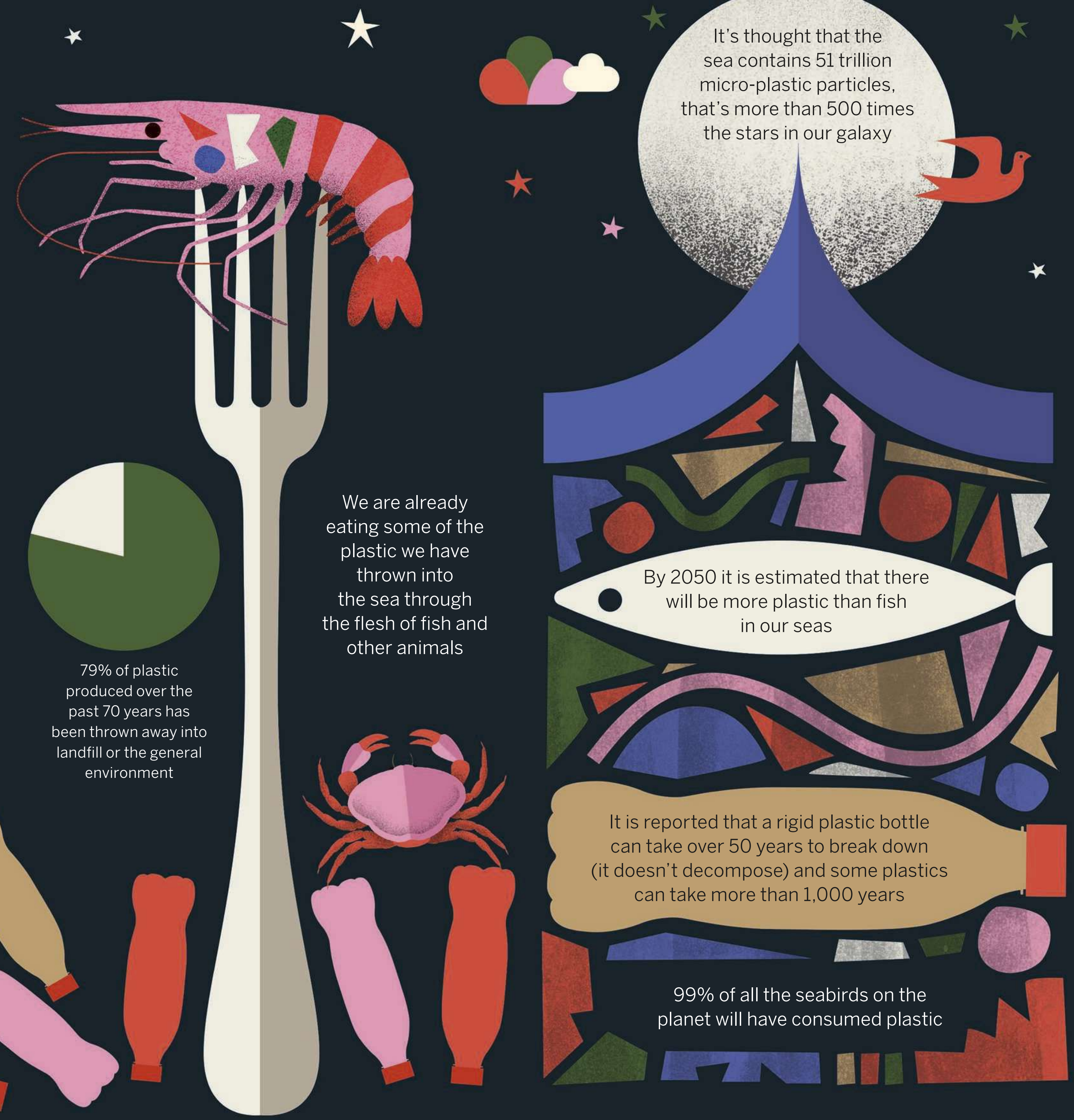
It's estimated that since the 1950s we've produced 8.3 billion metric tonnes of plastic

It's estimated that the average person has 39 plastic garden pots hanging around in their garden

The invention of a light, yet strong, plastic pot in the 1960s changed how we gardened forever. It revolutionised the growing industry and played no small part in the making of the garden centre. It meant you could sell plants throughout the year. It led to mechanised potting machines and industrial production of plants. It was a game changer.

For younger generations it's hard to imagine, but autumn and winter was once the only time that trees, shrubs and perennials could be lifted and sold. There were attempts to make cardboard pots, and there was the Heartlands paper pot for annuals and the whale-hide pot for tomatoes (made not from whales, but rigid pitch and fibre) but they all fell apart too quickly, which meant you couldn't have stock sitting around. Plastic changed all that.

It makes a great pot too: it holds moisture, and is light and strong. If plastic transformed the nursery industry, just think what it did for composting, labelling and protected growing – plastic polytunnels have allowed cheap, year-round production of vegetables. Plastic is everywhere – in netting, fleece, hoses, warm and light clothing, waterproofs, wellingtons and tools. But the downside, as we now know, is that it doesn't go away. It just breaks down into smaller and smaller particles.



It's thought that the sea contains 51 trillion micro-plastic particles, that's more than 500 times the stars in our galaxy
We are already eating some of the plastic we have thrown into the sea through the flesh of fish and other animals
79% of plastic produced over the past 70 years has been thrown away into landfill or the general environment
By 2050 it is estimated that there will be more plastic than fish in our seas
It is reported that a rigid plastic bottle can take over 50 years to break down (it doesn't decompose) and some plastics can take more than 1,000 years
99% of all the seabirds on the planet will have consumed plastic

It is thought that the sea contains 51 trillion micro-plastic particles. By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the sea and 99 per cent of all the seabirds on the planet will have consumed plastic. And we are already starting to consume some of that plastic through the flesh of fish and other animals.

In light of this, wouldn't it be good to get rid of some of the plastic in your garden? The easy answer is, of course, yes, but the reality is more complex. As horticultural consultant John Adlam explains, "For the grower, there are options. Some take back their old pots or polytunnel film, and some use either 100 per cent or a proportion of recycled plastic." But a strong plastic pot that will last more than six months needs a lot of virgin plastic, and recycled plastic tends to degrade much quicker.

"The industry has not closed its ears to finding a solution," says John, "but at present many of options just aren't stable or strong enough, they just shatter. What we need is a bio-plastic, the destiny of which we can control – perhaps it doesn't degrade until its sprayed with something that starts decomposition." The John Innes Centre has been trialling potato and pea starch as polymer for plastic, so the will to find a solution is out there.

In some areas, plastic pots are accepted in kerbside recycling. Sixty per cent of our plastic goes abroad to be recycled, in line ▷

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▷ with government subsidies. If you recycle in the UK, you only get paid for clean, sorted plastic, and this applies to just 40-50 per cent of an average tonne of collected recycling plastic. If you export, you get paid for the full tonne regardless of contamination. This incentivises processing outside of the UK.

There are several disadvantage to this. First, we're missing a trick: processing plastic could be a lucrative and innovative market, and from an ethical standpoint we should be dealing with our waste at home, not sending it elsewhere. Second, and perhaps more urgently, is that China, the world leader in plastic recycling, recently announced that it would no longer accept contaminated plastic, which is often impossible to recycle. The hunt is now on to find an alternative and in the meantime the recycling is stacking up.

As responsible gardeners, if you find a recycling point for plastic pots, do your duty. Wash your pots and stack them neatly. There's a reason why many local garden centres and council fail to provide such facilities, however, and this is because it is just not financially viable for recycling companies to collect limited numbers of unsorted, unclean pots.

There is a silver lining, though, in the shape of a pot that doesn't have a single bit of plastic it in. For the past 34 years, Derek Taylor of the Hairy Pot Plant Company has been growing plants for garden centres and multiples, and has seen the industry grow more commercial and competitive. "People try to stand out – bigger labels, brighter pots, better point-of-sales material," he says. "But we felt we were getting further and further away from the essential thing, which is that plants are green, living products. People often buy plants because it's a good thing for the environment and yet we seemed to be going in the wrong direction." So he decided to reduce the artificial element in selling plants. The result, after a lot of trialling, is a pot made from coir (hence the 'Hairy' name), made by a women's co-operative in Sri Lanka. There are also wooden labels and wooden reusable trays for the garden centre, peat-free compost and an extensive range of herbs and cottage garden plants. It's no small operation either, with 300,000 plants a year racing through the mechanised potting machines.

It's not been cheap. A plastic pot cost around 5p wholesale, while a coir one costs 30p, and because coir pots behave differently from plastic ones in a potting machine, an extra person is needed to feed them through. But the finances have stacked up. You can find Hairy plants everywhere, from garden centres to National Trust properties. And at the end of the day, the pot goes straight into your compost. "We felt it was the right thing to do," explains Derek. "You have a choice in life. You can get bigger or you can downsize and risk doing something you believe in."

The Hairy Pot Plant Company has shown there are innovative solutions to the plastic problem, and there's huge willingness throughout the industry to follow suit. Our bit as consumers is to support such endeavours. We have a responsibility to garden as gently as we can upon this green earth. ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION

- Learn more about the Hairy Pot Plant Company and find stockists for its pots at **hairypotplants.co.uk**
- Filcris Ltd is a large trade stockist and fabricator of recycled plastic products, offering a range of items from landscaping edging to plastic timber, raised beds and composters, **filcris.co.uk**
- Soparco produces pots, containers and other items made from a high percentage of recycled raw materials for use in horticulture and nurseries, **soparco.com**
- A Short Walk specialises in eco products and offers recycled garden items including Ecopots – durable, attractive containers made from recycled plastics, **ashortwalk.com**
- Plantpak by Crest offers seed trays, modules and gravel trays, all made from 100 per cent recycled plastic. Crest Garden also makes peat-free fibre pots, **crest-garden.com**

Top tips for responsible gardening

- Reuse, reuse, reuse: use compost bags as rubbish bags, scrub plastic labels for another year (metal scourers will remove permanent pen ink), and store plastic items, such as pots and propagator lids, out of direct sunlight so that they last longer.
- Question every bit of plastic that comes into your garden. What will you do with it when you've finished with it? Is there another option? Consider buying bamboo products and wooden-handled tools.
- Visit the Recycle Now website for details of your local options for recycling specific plastics. Recyclable products are marked with a numbered triangular label to indicate what they are made off. Most plastic pots are made from high-density polyethylene (HDPE, triangular label 2) or polypropylene (PP, triangular label 5). Most kerbside recycling takes Triangular label 2. **recyclenow.com**
- Buy recycled plastic or biodegradable products where you can.
- Consider using your recycling. It may be the oldest trick in the book, but the humble yoghurt pot makes an excellent seed pot.

SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES

More ideas for greener gardening

PEAT FREE
WOOL COMPOST
WOOL COMPOST
WOOL COMPOST
HIGH NATURAL POTASH

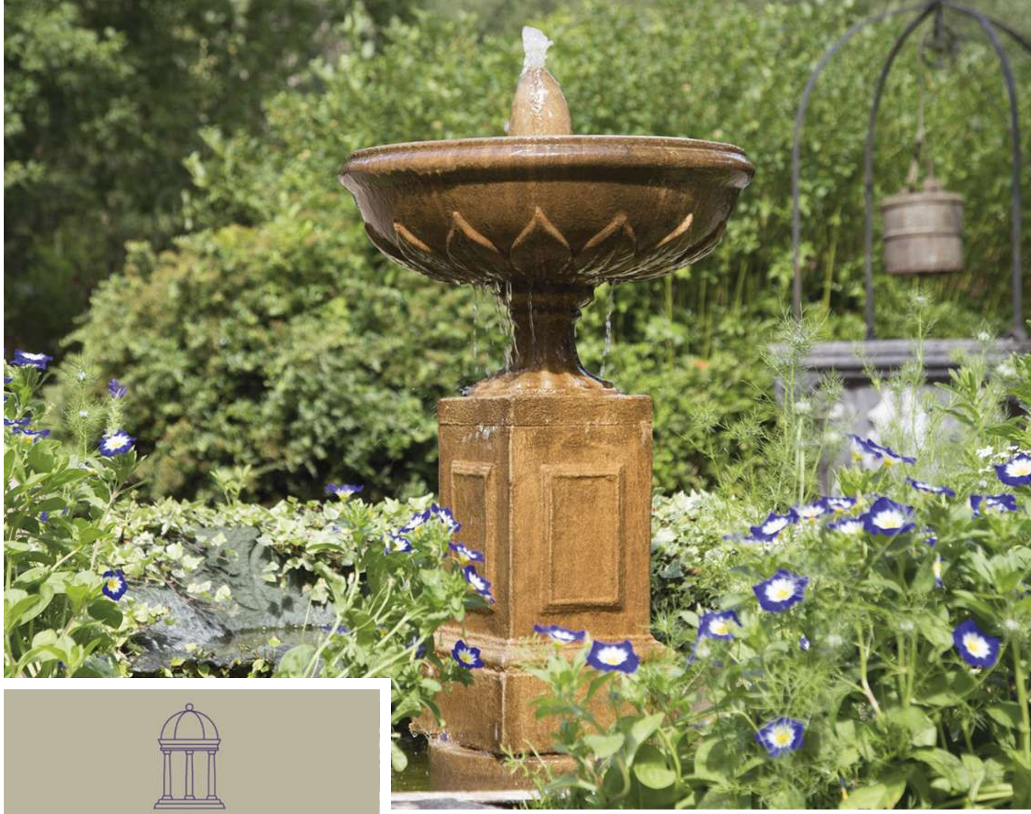
Left to right: Plant Label Plain (set of 5 with wax pencil) made from recycled plant pots**,** £4.95, 01872 575000, shop.ashortwalk.com; **Wool Compost** is a peat-free mix of renewable resources including sheep wool and bracken, £10.99 for a single bag, 01931 713281, dalefootcomposts.co.uk; this **Recycled Plastic Garden Bench** is very durable and 100 per cent recyclable, £615, 01726 884123, sustainable-furniture.co.uk

Darlac
Darlac

Dispense with plastic seedling pots with this **Eco Soil Blocker – 20 Cell,** £16.95, 0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk; this **Beren Gilet** has a 100 per cent recycled polyester outer layer and recycled insulation fill, £110, 01872 554481, finisterre.com; bamboo is fast-growing and 100 per cent sustainable, so bamboo-handled tools, such as Darlac's **Weeding Fork and Garden Trowel,** are a good option, both £9.99, 01753 547790, see darlac.com for stockists

ECOPOTS
BRIERS

You can plant these biodegradable **Coir Pots** made by the Hairy Pot Plant Company straight into the ground, prices start at £6.20 for 20, 10.75cm pots, 01931 713281, thenaturalgardener.co.uk; this **Ecopots Antwerp** is made from 20 recycled 1.5 litre bottles, £19.95, 01872 575000, shop.ashortwalk.com; these **Bamboo Gloves** contain some nylon but are more sustainable choice than many other plastic gloves, £5.99, 01963 269077, briersltd.co.uk



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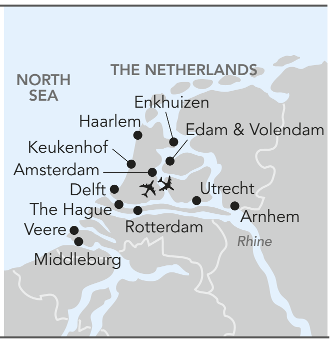

Spring is the perfect time of year to immerse yourself in the cultural and horticultural splendours of the Netherlands. During our voyage we will explore the countryside in some depth, visiting the magnificent flower displays of the Keukenhof, the picturesque towns of the Zuider Zee, the botanical gardens in Utrecht and of course the art treasures of Amsterdam and The Hague.

The Itinerary in Brief

Day 1 London, Bristol, Manchester or Edinburgh to Amsterdam, Netherlands. Fly from your chosen airport by scheduled flight or travel by train in Standard Premier Class from London St Pancras. Drive to the MS Royal Crown and embark.

Day 2 Amsterdam. After breakfast on board, we will depart for a visit to the Rijksmuseum, arguably Amsterdam's most important art venue. Return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon there will be an optional tour to visit the 'Bloemenmarkt', one of the city's most colourful attractions and the world's only floating flower market.

Day 3 Amsterdam. This morning we will visit the Van Gogh Museum which houses one of the world's largest collection of works by the artist. Return to the MS Royal Crown for lunch and this afternoon there will be a choice of included excursions. Choose to join a relaxing canal cruise or visit the Hermitage Museum.

Day 4 Enkhuizen, Edam & Volendam. After breakfast on board we depart for our exploration of the Zuider Zee. We will drive to Edam, a tranquil little town with charming historic houses. We then continue on to the attractive town of Volendam to see its colourful wooden houses and old fishing boats in the harbour. Enjoy some free time here before returning to your ship in Enkhuizen for lunch and an afternoon at leisure.

Day 5 Arnhem. After breakfast join an excursion to Middachten Castle & Gardens. Although the castle dates from the early Middle Ages, the house in its present form was built towards the end of the 17th century and still includes some Medieval parts.

Day 6 Veere & Middelburg. Today we explore Southern Zeeland, starting in the 13th century town of Veere, a charming place with well-preserved houses and a marina. Enjoy free time here to explore before we sail on to the Medieval town of Middelburg where we enjoy a guided walking tour.

Day 7 Rotterdam, The Hague, Delft. From Rotterdam we depart for a full day tour. Our first stop will be The Hague for a visit to the beautiful Mauritshuis Museum with its marvellous collection of Dutch Golden Age paintings. Afterwards continue on to Delft where we will enjoy lunch and a walking tour of this pretty town, finishing with a visit to see the Delft Blue Pottery.

Day 8 Keukenhof Gardens & Haarlem. After breakfast drive to nearby Keukenhof Gardens for a morning in this extraordinary horticultural heaven. After lunch on board enjoy some free time in Utrecht or join an optional excursion to Haarlem.

Day 9 Utrecht. This morning we will visit Utrecht's Botanical Gardens at Fort Hoofddijk, a unique natural treasure consisting of thousands of plant species. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure in this pretty town. Alternatively you may wish to join our optional excursion to see the opulent De Haar Castle.

Day 10 Amsterdam to London, Bristol, Manchester or Edinburgh. Disembark after breakfast. Transfer to the airport and return to your chosen UK airport by scheduled flight or to London St Pancras by Eurostar.

MS Royal Crown

For this river journey we have chartered the 90-passenger MS Royal Crown, a sumptuous vessel for the discerning traveller. With just 45 cabins she is elegantly appointed and suites are fitted with spacious rosewood cupboards, a dressing table, satellite TV and radio, a safety deposit box, individually controlled air-conditioning and en-suite facilities with shower and hairdryer. The onboard facilities such as the library, fitness area and lounge with its panoramic views, all combine to create a relaxing and special cruise experience. Outside there is a large sun deck, lido bar, a putting green and large scale chessboard. The restaurant has open seating, allowing you to sit where and with whom you like at each meal.

Prices & Inclusions

Special offer prices per person based on double occupancy start from **£2595** for a Junior Suite.

What's Included:

- Economy class scheduled air travel or Eurostar train travel in Standard Premier Class
- Nine nights aboard the MS Royal Crown on a full board basis
- House wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch & dinner
- Shore excursions
- Cruise Director, Tour Manager & Guest Speaker
- Gratuities
- Transfers

NB. Ports and itinerary subject to change. All special offers are subject to availability. Travel insurance & optional excursions are not included in the price. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations.

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DESERT BLOOM

The collaborative trio of Grimshaw Architects, Arup Engineering and Haley Sharpe Design has revealed its masterplan for the Oman Botanic Garden, an eco park in the foothills of the Al Hajar mountains in northeastern Oman. The garden, covering 420 hectares, will be the largest of its kind in the Arabian Peninsula and will celebrate and conserve the country's botanic diversity by re-creating its eight principal habitats, the most sensitive enclosed in two biomes. The garden will also include a visitor centre, and education and research facilities. **grimshaw.global**

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NEWS

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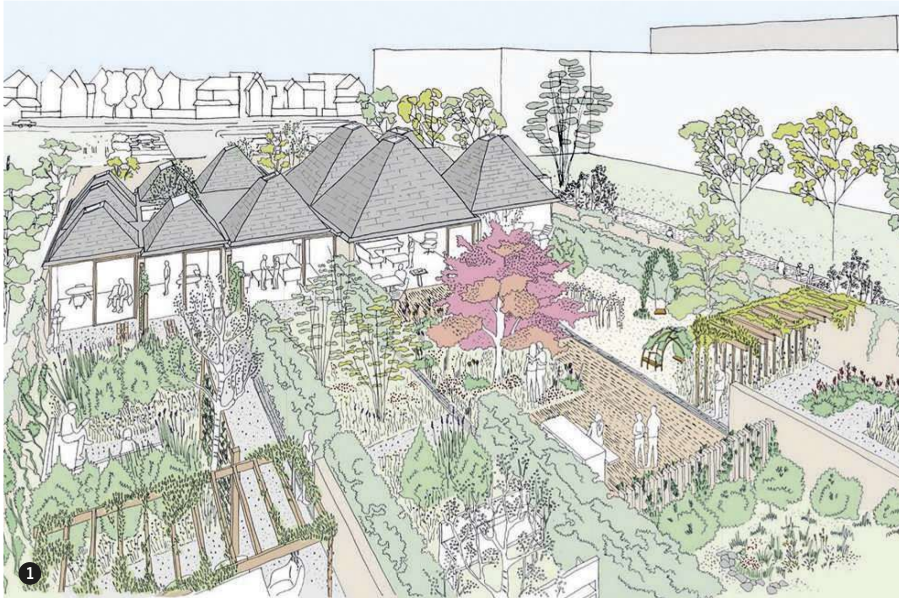
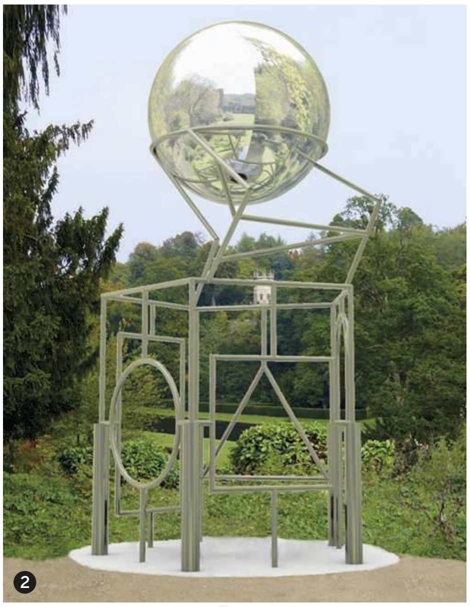
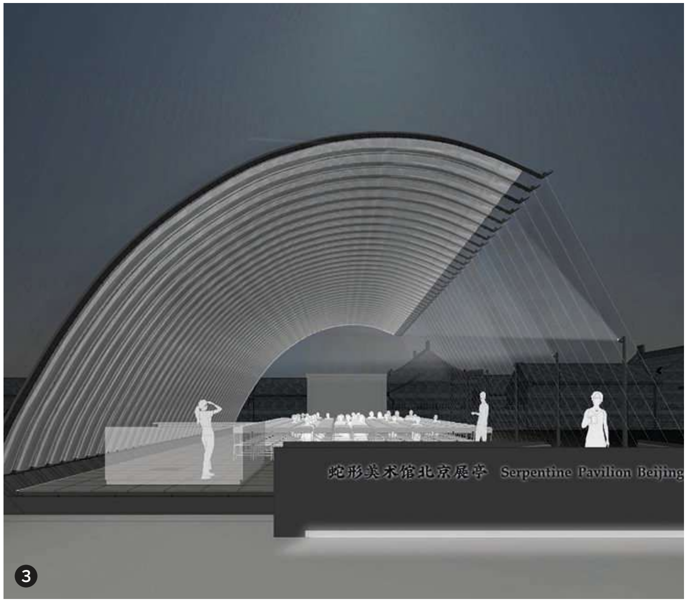
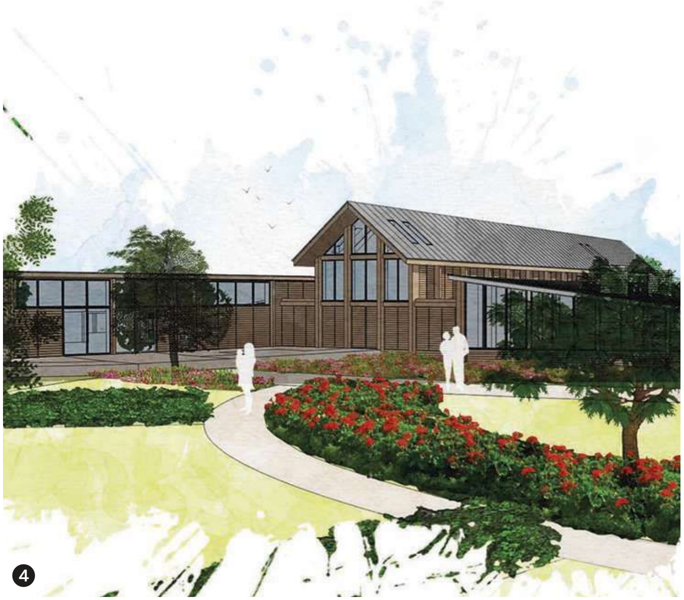








ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS, LUCY AND JORGE ORTA, JIAKUN ARCHITECTS, BARCHAM TREES PLC

① ALDER HEY CENTRE

London landscape architects BBUK has won a competition to design the gardens of the Alder Centre at Liverpool's Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Their theme, the Secret Garden, is inspired by the classic children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett in which a walled garden helps to heal two children. It includes a series of small, intimate spaces designed to relate each of the counselling rooms to the garden. Each space is enclosed by hedges that seem to extend the internal walls into the gardens and has one dominant plant. At the heart of the building are two larger gardens with lawns and a rill that drains to a rain garden. **bbukstudio.com**

② FOLLY!

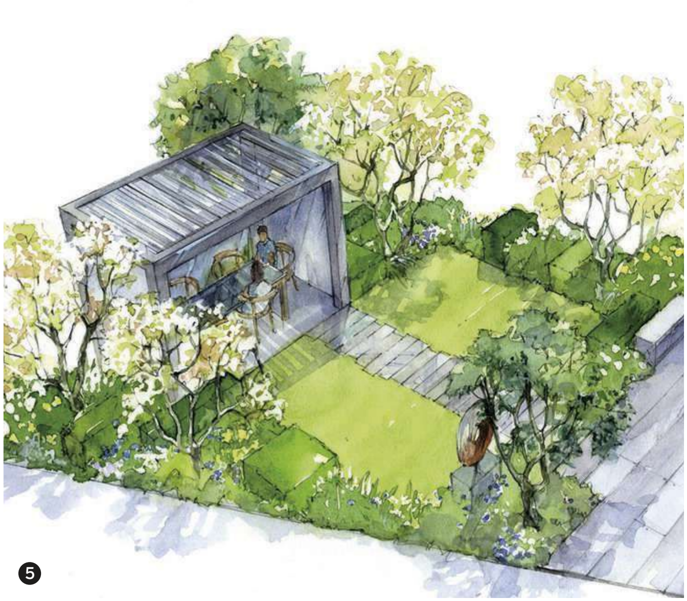
The National Trust's contemporary art programme, *folly!*, returns to Foutains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden this month. This year three large-scale artworks will be placed on sites at Studley where it's thought the garden's lost follies once stood. Artists include Charles Holland, whose shingle-clad, 9m-high tower recalls an exotic bird, Lucy and Jorge Orta whose 4m high Gazing Ball (above) on the site of the Rotundo folly will reflect the moon ponds and mirrored waters of the garden, and architects FleaFolly, which has devised a listening tower that references the lost Bathing House folly. 28 April to 4 November. **nationaltrust.org.uk/folly**

③ SERPENTINE PAVILION BEIJING

The first Pavilion co-commissioned by the Serpentine Galleries to be built outside of the UK will open in Beijing in May. Designed by Chinese practice JIAKUN architects, Serpentine Pavilion Beijing, will be erected outside WF CENTRAL, a lifestyle retail centre in Dongcheng District, and will be used to host a series of public events. It's made up of a curved cantilever beam that incorporates the forces of elasticity through cables stretched between steel plates. This suggests the tension of an archer's bow, archery being one of the traditional pursuits in the Chinese philosophy of Junzi. **serpentinegalleries.org**

④ BARCHAM TREES

Barcham Trees, Europe's largest container tree nursery, has been given planning permission to develop its 300-acre site near Ely in Cambridgeshire. The plans, drawn up in collaboration with the Huck Partnership landscape architects, include a 12-acre arboretum, with examples of all 478 different trees sold at the nursery, and a lake that will be linked to the reservoirs that currently supply the company's water needs. The nursery hopes to transform the site into a major destination for gardeners and designers alike alongside a new visitor centre and restaurant. Planting of the arboretum is due to start this autumn. **barcham.co.uk**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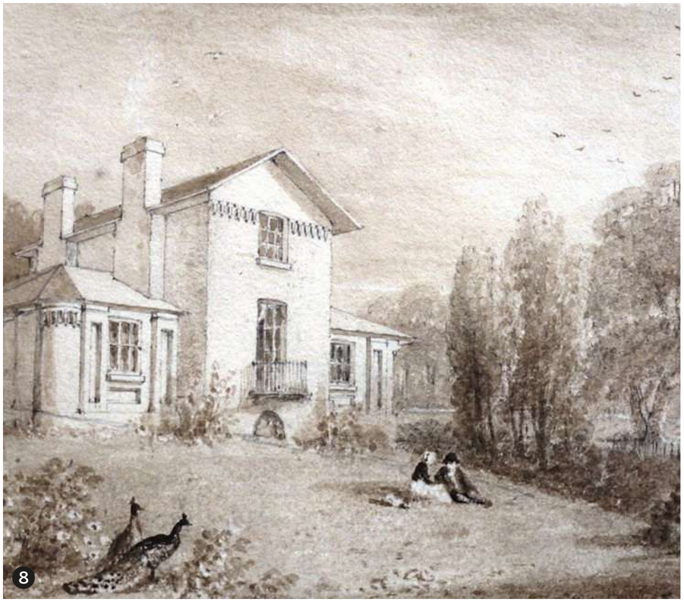
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⑤ ASCOT SPRING GARDEN SHOW

Six inspiring show gardens on the theme of Town and Country, are a highlight of the inaugural Ascot Spring Garden Show. Among the six gardens is one from Chelsea gold medallist Catherine Macdonald, who has adapted her design for a London garden (above) for the show. Based at Ascot Racecourse, the new show will also offer an opportunity to browse plant stalls from specialist nurseries, including Architectural Plants, The Plant Specialist, Avon Bulbs and Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants, and get gardening advice from the team at the Savill Garden and The Valley Gardens. 13-15 April. **ascot.co.uk**

⑥ NORTON MUSEUM OF ART GARDEN

Plans have been revealed for the first public garden designed by architect Norman Foster at the Norton Museum of Art in Florida. Foster's design will place the recently re-aligned, Art Deco-inspired pavilions within a subtropical landscape and will be made up of a series of garden areas filled with native trees and flowers. These will be arranged axially along the southern edge of the museum, and each area will feature sculptures from the museum grouped together on a specific theme. The garden and expanded museum will open to the public in early 2019. **norton.org**

⑦ RIBA HOUSE OF THE YEAR AWARD

An eco-friendly house that merges beautifully with the surrounding Kentish countryside has won the RIBA House of the Year Award 2017. Designed by architects James Macdonald Wright and Niall Maxwell, Caring Wood was inspired by Kent's traditional oast houses with four interlinked towers providing accommodation for three generations of one family. The house revives local crafts and uses locally coppiced chestnut cladding. Outside what was once intensively farmed land has been nurtured into a wildflower meadow with a pond that manages the run-off of water. **architecture.com**

⑧ TURNER'S GARDEN

The garden of Britain's most celebrated landscape painter JMW Turner has reopened after a major restoration. The artist's former garden at Sandycombe Lodge in Twickenham, has been re-shaped with ground modelling to recreate the original grassy mound that gave Turner a view of the Thames. Extensive tree work has opened up the site and restored viewing lines. The planting has been informed by a drawing (above) made by William Havell in 1814 that shows cottage garden plants close to the house and a lawn sloping eastwards. Rembrandt tulips in spring will be followed by pink and white roses in May and June. **turnerhouse.org**

CATHERINE MACDONALD. FOSTER + PARTNERS. DAVID JESSUP. ROBERT HAVELL. JAMES MORRIS

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

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Since her arrival in the UK in 2015, sleek, majestic Magellan has built a fine reputation, and has been a welcome addition to the CMV fleet of traditional ocean-going cruise liners. Sailing from a choice of regional ports Magellan brings a touch of contemporary chic to the traditional welcome of the CMV cruise experience.

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Grand Baltic Cities & St Petersburg	15 May	15	Columbus	**£2,169**	Free
Majestic Fjordland	29 May	8	Columbus	**£1,069**	Free
Iceland & Northern Isles	15 Jun	13	Columbus	**£1,859**	Free
Canary Islands & Madeira	16 Oct	16	Columbus	**£2,179**	Free
Weekend to Amsterdam and Antwerp	31 Oct	4	Columbus	**£439**	Free
Arctic & Greenland Expedition Voyage	21 Jul	23	Marco Polo	**£3,559**	Free
Rotterdam Mini Cruise	12 Aug	3	Marco Polo	**£259**	Free
Sailing from Portsmouth					
Special 75th D Day Anniversary	2 Jun	7	Marco Polo	**£979**	Free
Rouen Armada & River Seine	9 Jun	9	Marco Polo	**£1,209**	Free
Iceland & Northern Isles	17 Jun	13	Marco Polo	**£1,769**	Free
Sailing from Newcastle					
Baltic Cities & St Petersburg	4 May	15	Magellan	**£2,129**	Free
Majestic Fjordland	18 May	8	Magellan	**£1,069**	Free
Round Britain & River Seine	21 June	12	Magellan	**£1,709**	Free
Overnight Mini Cruise	14 Aug	2	Marco Polo	**£109**	Free

2019 Cruise programme	Departs	Days	Ship	Full fare first person	Second person
Sailing from Dundee					
Iceland, Faroes & Northern Isles	9 Jun	14	Magellan	**£2,019**	Free
Round Britain & River Seine	22 Jun	12	Magellan	**£1,709**	Free
Sailing from Liverpool					
Grand Fjordland Splendour	27 Jul	13	Magellan	**£1,859**	Free
Spain, Portugal & Gibraltar	8 Aug	11	Magellan	**£1,519**	Free
Sailing from Bristol					
British Isles Discovery	1 Sep	12	Magellan	**£1,709**	Free
Iceland's Land of Ice & Fire	12 Sep	13	Magellan	**£1,769**	Free
Sailing from Cardiff					
Iceland & Northern Isles	3 May	13	Marco Polo	**£1,769**	Free
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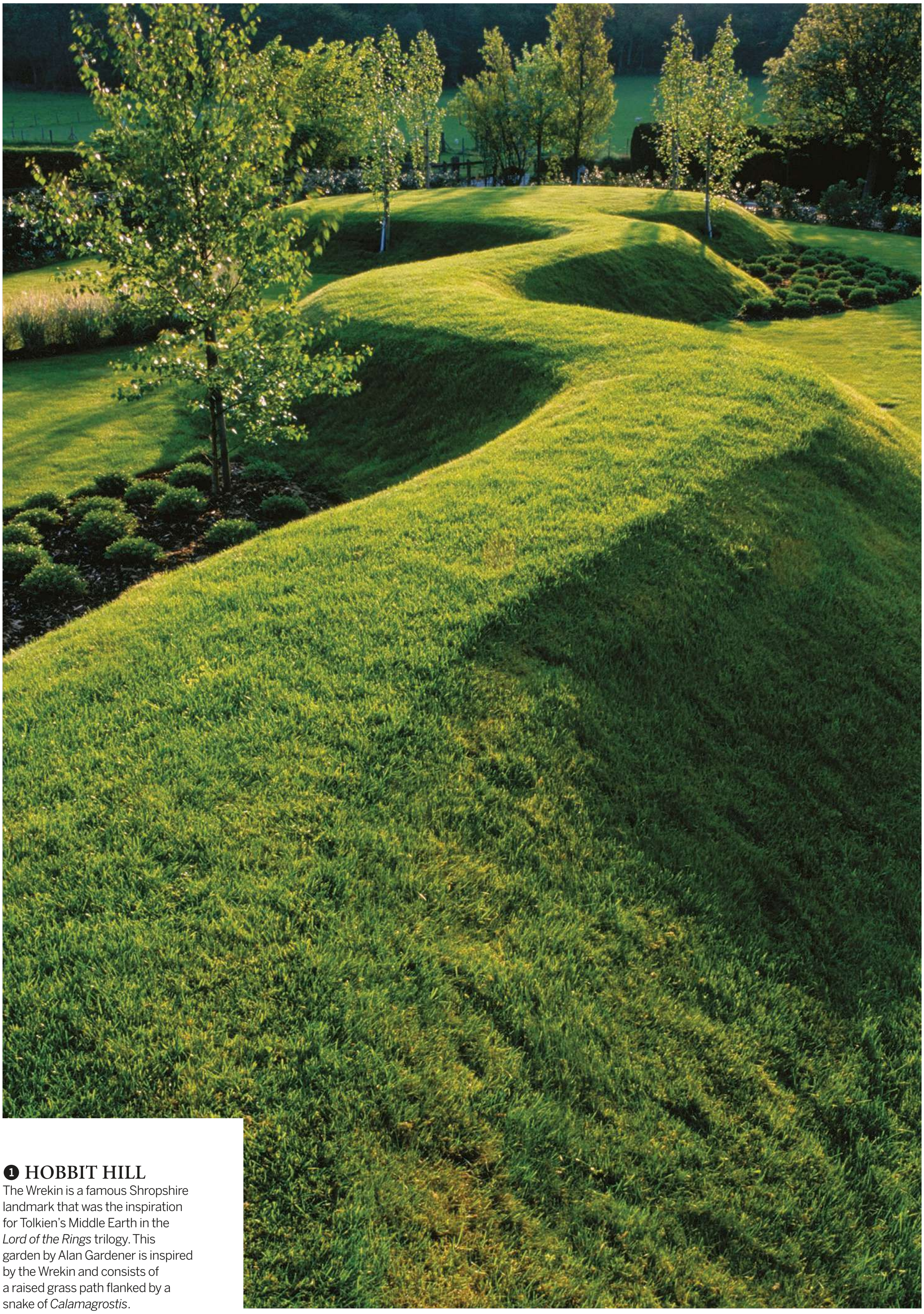

❶ HOBBIT HILL

The Wrekin is a famous Shropshire landmark that was the inspiration for Tolkien's Middle Earth in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. This garden by Alan Gardener is inspired by the Wrekin and consists of a raised grass path flanked by a snake of *Calamagrostis*.

JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

LANDFORMS

There may be little call for an amphitheatre or grassy mound in the average suburban plot, but James Alexander-Sinclair feels that every garden is just that little bit better if it contains a hillock

WORDS JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR

Once upon a time landforms were known by different names; hills, perhaps, or maybe heaps. Call them whatsoever you wish but they have long been featured in gardens. The difference is that the technique of moving and forming large amounts of soil has become much easier and more sophisticated. Simply put, it is a hell of a lot easier to build a berm, bund or burial mound with a digger than it ever was with a gang of chaps with spades and wheelbarrows.

That is not to diss the labourer as they have been doing pretty impressive stuff for many centuries – I suppose the first landforms were burial chambers or even ridge and furrow fields. The classic defensive burh was a series of ditches and mounds built on the orders of King Alfred to protect the citizenry from marauding Danes. In more peaceful times the first garden landforms were developed by landscape designers, such as Charles Bridgeman, whose work can still be seen at Stowe, Rousham and Claremont in Surrey. It pops up again in Dartington Hall, Devon, where there are some fine grass terraces designed by the Arts and Crafts garden designer, Percy Cane.

But even with technology and skilled digger drivers surely there are only limited reasons for the average garden owner to think about landforms? True there is not much call for amphitheatres or grassy mounds in the average suburban garden but even there it can be useful.

We should pause here for a moment and consider the difference between a slick modern landform and a mound or hummock – the former is engineered and expertly sculpted: it has sharp edges and perfectly angled slopes and is obviously and unarguably a work of art. The latter are less disciplined but can be equally effective: we will be covering both forms.

One of the most practical reasons for landforms is to get rid of any excess soil that has appeared. If you were a stately home owner in the 18th century it might be because Mr ‘Capability’ Brown or Mr Repton had just dug you a lake or a new road. For the average householder it might be that you have just dug the foundations for a kitchen extension or sunk a child’s trampoline into your lawn. You are then left with some excess earth and rather than put it all in an expensive skip, why not make something out of it?

Perhaps, for example, you have an eyesore within view of your kitchen window – a ferret farm or power station. You could plant trees to block the view but know that it will take at least a quarter of a century for the trees to reach the correct height. However, if you use this free soil to create a mound then plant the trees on top you have instantly gained a decade. You have also made a high viewing point from where you can look back and down upon your garden – a new vista and a fresh way of seeing things.

James Alexander-Sinclair is a garden designer, writer, broadcaster and founder of into-gardens.com. He has served on the RHS Council for the past five years.

Of course if you have more space then you can create something not only functional but magnificent. The current Master of the Mound (or Laird of Landform) is probably Charles Jencks who has made some pretty sensational examples at his Garden of Cosmic Speculation in Dumfries and at the Museum of Modern Art in Edinburgh. Elegantly curving and sinuous shapes dipping and swooping around dark ponds. They may not be that easy to mow (swinging strimmers on ropes is the usual solution) but my goodness they are lovely, not just as landscape features but as things that everybody, young and old, wants to climb. Another exemplar is Kim Wilkie who has made a six metre high grass amphitheatre for an hotel by the M25 and the awe inspiring *Orpheus* at Boughton House in Northamptonshire – on a smaller scale he made a tiered grass wedding-cake arrangement outside County Hall in London.

Of course your landform need not necessarily be turfed – often wildflower mixes work very well (particularly on poorer soils) and, of course, trees and spring bulbs are always good. I am sure that not all of you have space or inclination for a massive aggregation of soil in your garden but if both the urge and the opportunity come upon you then you will soon find that every garden feels better with a hillock. □

James will be back in the June issue discussing paths.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Creating a landform can be tricky. There is a fair bit of engineering involved as soil is heavy and if you pile it too high, too fast and too steep then it will collapse like an embarrassed jelly. You need to be aware of soil structure, density and drainage. If you are building a hill then build it in layers carefully compacting each one as you go – but not compacting it so much that the water cannot escape (I did warn you this was tricky). If you’re turfing then you need to pin each turf in place using pegs or metal spikes. These need to stay until the turf has totally settled. I would suggest you consult a reputable and experienced landscaper who you can find from the **Association of Professional Landscapers** (landscaper.org.uk).

If you want too see how it should be done then many of the landforms shown on these pages open to the public. ***Northumberlandia, the Lady of the North*** (northumberlandia.com) is in a public park, north of Newcastle upon Tyne so you can visit her at any time. **Boughton House** (boughtonhouse.co.uk) is open this year for Easter, May Bank Holiday, for all of August and to groups at other times by appointment. The gardens at **Hauser & Wirth** (hauserwirthsomerset.com) open year-round and the gallery is good too. You’ll also find fabulous modern paintings and sculpture and landforms at the **The Scottish Gallery of Modern Art** (nationalgalleries.org) in Edinburgh. The **Garden of Cosmic Speculation** opens for just one day a year for Scotland’s Gardens Scheme (scotlandsgardens.org).

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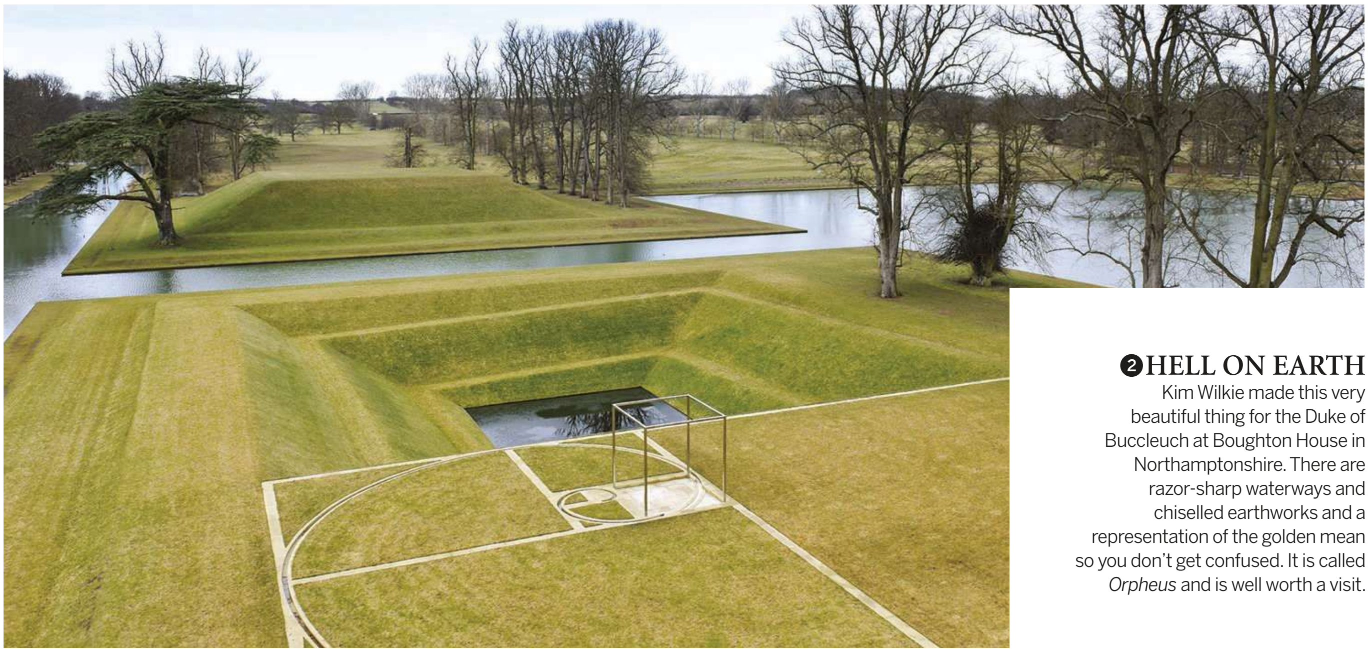
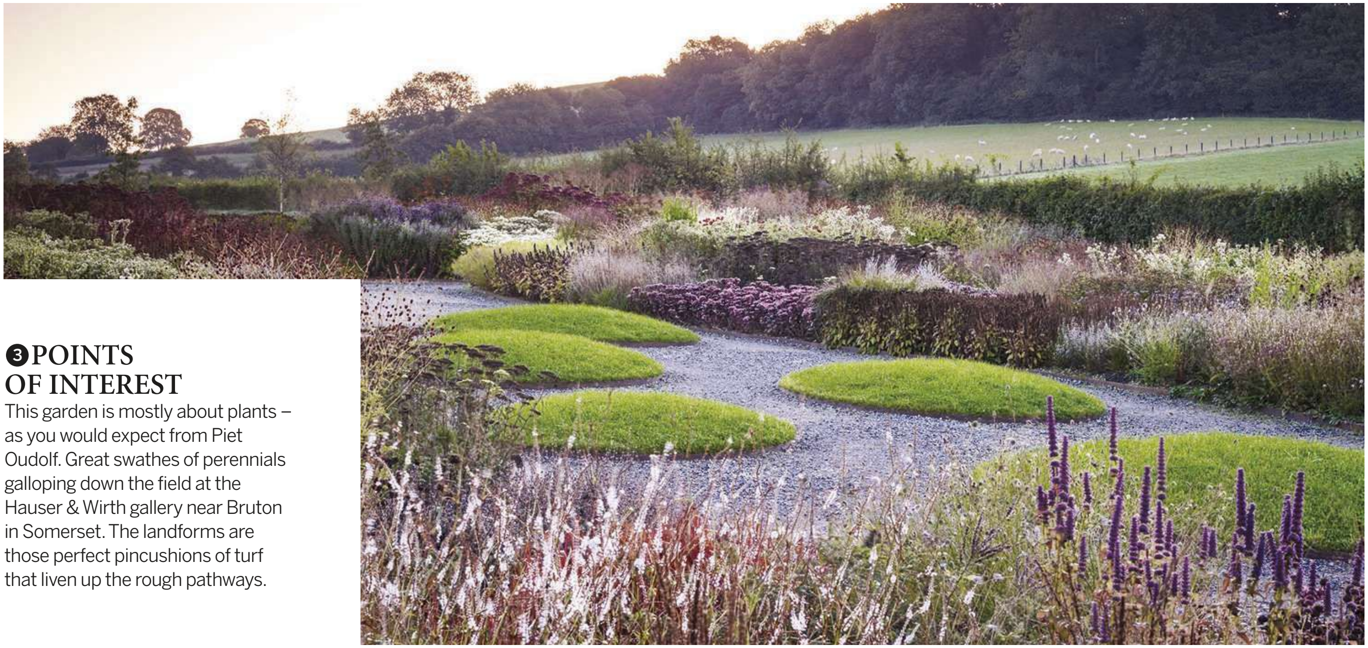
TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For details about the Garden Trading range go to gardentrading.co.uk. Garden Trading reserves the right to change arrangements due to circumstances beyond its control. 15% discount not valid with any other offers and excludes sofa sets. You must book a place to confirm attendance as numbers are limited. Please note that the *Gardens Illustrated* editor will not be in attendance all day. For more details on Green & Gorgeous go to greenandgorgeousflowers.co.uk



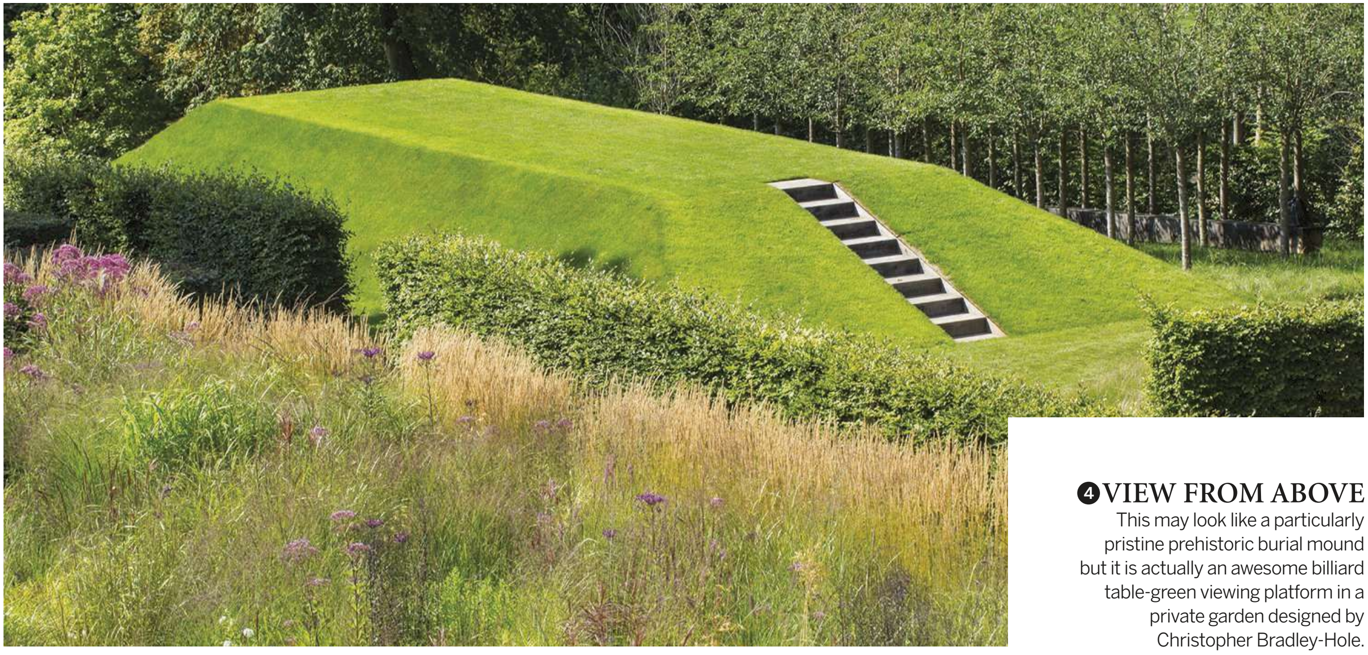
❷ HELL ON EARTH

Kim Wilkie made this very beautiful thing for the Duke of Buccleuch at Boughton House in Northamptonshire. There are razor-sharp waterways and chiselled earthworks and a representation of the golden mean so you don't get confused. It is called *Orpheus* and is well worth a visit.



❸ POINTS OF INTEREST

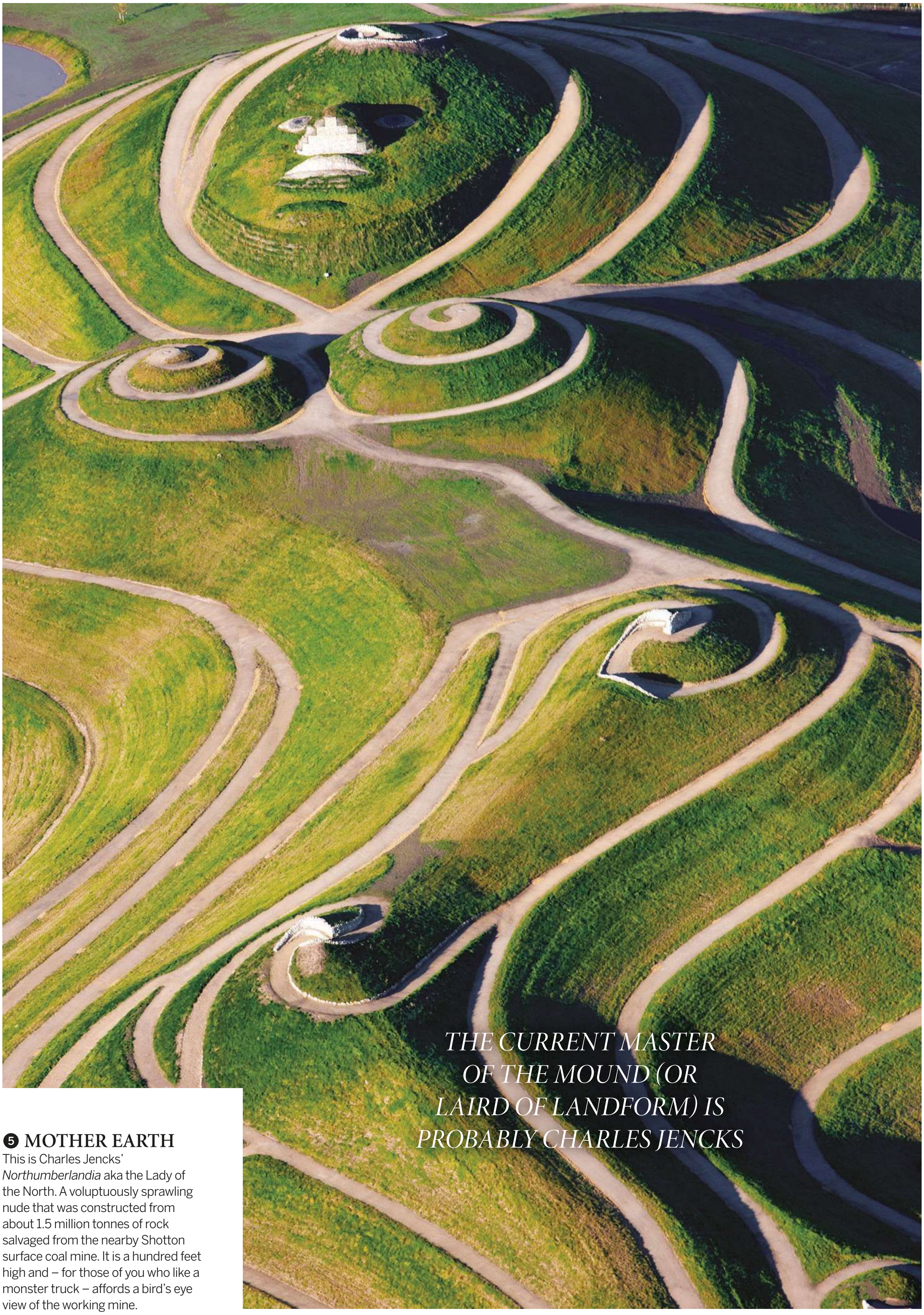
This garden is mostly about plants – as you would expect from Piet Oudolf. Great swathes of perennials galloping down the field at the Hauser & Wirth gallery near Bruton in Somerset. The landforms are those perfect pincushions of turf that liven up the rough pathways.



❹ VIEW FROM ABOVE

This may look like a particularly pristine prehistoric burial mound but it is actually an awesome billiard table-green viewing platform in a private garden designed by Christopher Bradley-Hole.

2 & 3 JASON INGRAM; 4 MARIANNE MAJERUS. DESIGN CHRISTOPHER BRADLEY-HOLE



THE CURRENT MASTER OF THE MOUND (OR LAIRD OF LANDFORM) IS PROBABLY CHARLES JENCKS

❺ MOTHER EARTH
This is Charles Jencks' *Northumberlandia* aka the Lady of the North. A voluptuously sprawling nude that was constructed from about 1.5 million tonnes of rock salvaged from the nearby Shotton surface coal mine. It is a hundred feet high and – for those of you who like a monster truck – affords a bird's eye view of the working mine.

GRAEME PEACOCK / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

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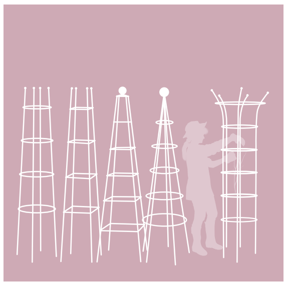

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DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, reader offer, crossword, back issues

The use of poppies as both pain-relieving opiate and addictive, recreational drug is explored in Elizabeth A Dauncy and Sonny Larsson's *Plants that Kill*, reviewed on page 106.

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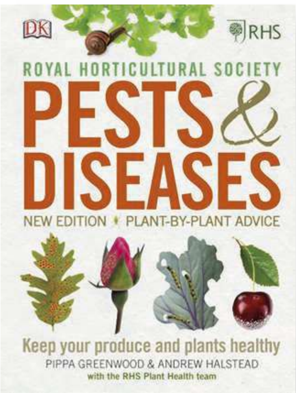
BOOK REVIEWS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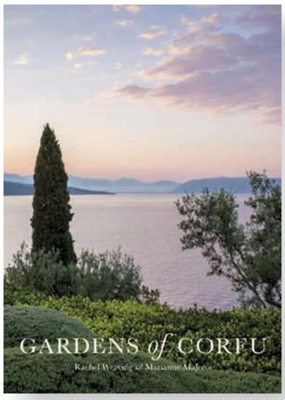
An indispensable reference book for gardeners of all levels of experience with practical advice on how to keep your plants free of disease.

Reviewer Rory Dusoir is a Kew-trained gardener and writer.

The fifth edition of this definitive publication was eagerly awaited. Although, of course, much remains constant since the last edition in 2009, there will also have been many areas of evolution in the arms race between gardeners and their many foes. Numerous chemical controls will have been banned or superseded, and new problems will have emerged. Who had heard of ash dieback in 2009? This edition is authored once again by those doyens of plant pathology Pippa Greenwood and Andrew Halstead, but presents a thorough revision of the text. For some time Greenwood ran the Plant Pathology Department at RHS Wisley (which deals with thousands of gardeners' queries nationwide), and has become very well known for her work on *Gardeners' Question Time;* Halstead was until recently principal entomologist for the RHS. Therefore, the pair not only have a wealth of scientific knowledge between them, but also a great deal of experience in how that relates to common gardeners' problems.

The book's format has changed little since earlier editions. It offers a number of different routes to identifying specific problems – you can start with the photographic gallery, organised by type, or use the extensive A-Z list of actual conditions. Alternatively, all diseases are carefully cross-referenced against lists of plant species – so that you can look up the name of the plant you are concerned about and find a list of problems to which it is subject. The authors offer pragmatic advice on the use of garden chemicals, without judgement. But, the book can also serve as a first point of reference for organic growers, as the authors encourage a balanced approach to pest problems and offer ingenious organic control methods.



GARDENS OF CORFU

by Rachel Weaving
Photographs by Marianne Majerus

Impress Publishing, £49.95
ISBN 978-1999782511

A coffee-table topper that explores the unexpected gardens of Corfu and will leave you yearning for your own island retreat.

Reviewer Stephanie Mahon is the editor of Garden Design Journal.

Reading Rachel Weaving's book on Corfu gardens in a cold British spring is a marvellously cruel experience. The author is a late convert to the island, but spends much of her time there now creating her own Corfiot garden, and this book is her love letter to her adopted home. Her descriptions and Marianne Majerus's images transport you instantly to lush, rocky hillsides bathed in Mediterranean sunlight, and a selection of gardens, both old and recently created.

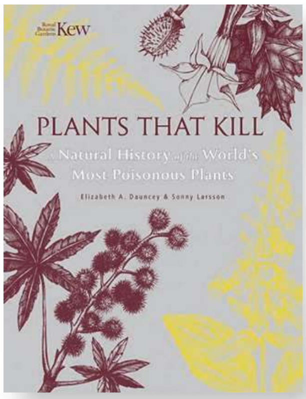
Designer Mary Keen has long been in thrall to the magic of Corfu and explains why in her succinct preface, before Weaving provides a brief introduction to the garden heritage and culture of the island. There is also an explanation of the local soil, topography and climate.

The first set of gardens are of heritage properties, the historic country estates and manor houses of once-wealthy families. Here the rustic off-red walls and mature trees give a romantic air, but it is the views that steal the show.

The chapter on contemporary gardens highlights some of the recent superstars of modern Mediterranean garden design, including Alithea Johns, Jennifer Gay and Thomas Doxiadis – many of whom use local plants and naturalistic effects borrowed from the surrounding landscape to create sustainable gardens.

Weaving finishes with a look at the wider landscapes and plants of the island, including information on the beautiful wildflowers that colonise it each spring. The overall effect is that you develop a bad habit of regularly checking for flights online, in the hope that as soon as possible you will find yourself sitting under one of the beautiful pergolas she features, draped in blooming wisteria.

BOOK REVIEWS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PLANTS THAT KILL
A Natural History of the World's Most Poisonous Plants
Elizabeth A. Dauncy & Sonny Larsson

PLANTS THAT KILL: A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD'S MOST POISONOUS PLANTS

by Elizabeth A Dauncy and
Sonny Larsson

Kew Publishing, £25
ISBN 978-1842466575

A fascinating reference work for anyone who has a background in medicine or a fascination with plants, but comes with a word of caution.

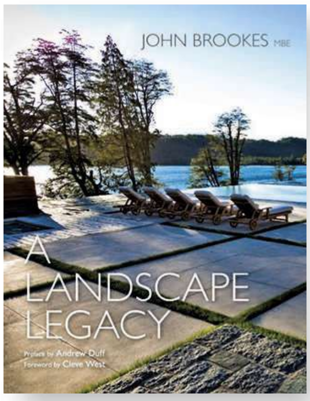
Reviewer Matt Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener and presenter.

Many plants make a positive contribution to our existence, providing clothes, food, housing and transport – without them we would not survive. But there are also plants with the power to kill and this fascinating book is both terrifying and exciting in equal measure.

The early pages set the scene, providing information on parts of the plant, what makes them poisonous and how toxins affect different areas of the body before moving on to the plants themselves. More sinister stories make a gripping read and the gruesome symptoms of poisoning are often alarming; thankfully such horrors are tempered by a host of fascinating facts. It is revealing, for example, that badgers are unaffected by *Taxus* seeds; that Agatha Christie once worked as a pharmaceutical dispenser; and that one should be wary of an arrow poison that can bring down an elephant and of spreading honey on ergot-infested rye bread. After negotiating such terrors, you may find yourself checking your pulse by the final chapter: Turning Foes into Friends, which details the remarkable contribution plants have made to healing leaving you marvelling at their prowess as biochemical powerhouses and the importance of conservation.

The scientific nature of this book and its clear images make for a detailed, informative reference work for medical professionals, balanced with information that readers with a general interest in the subject can to dip into at leisure.

As someone who almost died from accidental plant poisoning, I am acutely aware of the value of this book, its contents are a graphic reminder that poisonous plants in our gardens should be placed, planted and handled with care.



A LANDSCAPE LEGACY

by John Brookes

Pimpernel Press, £40
ISBN 978-1910258934

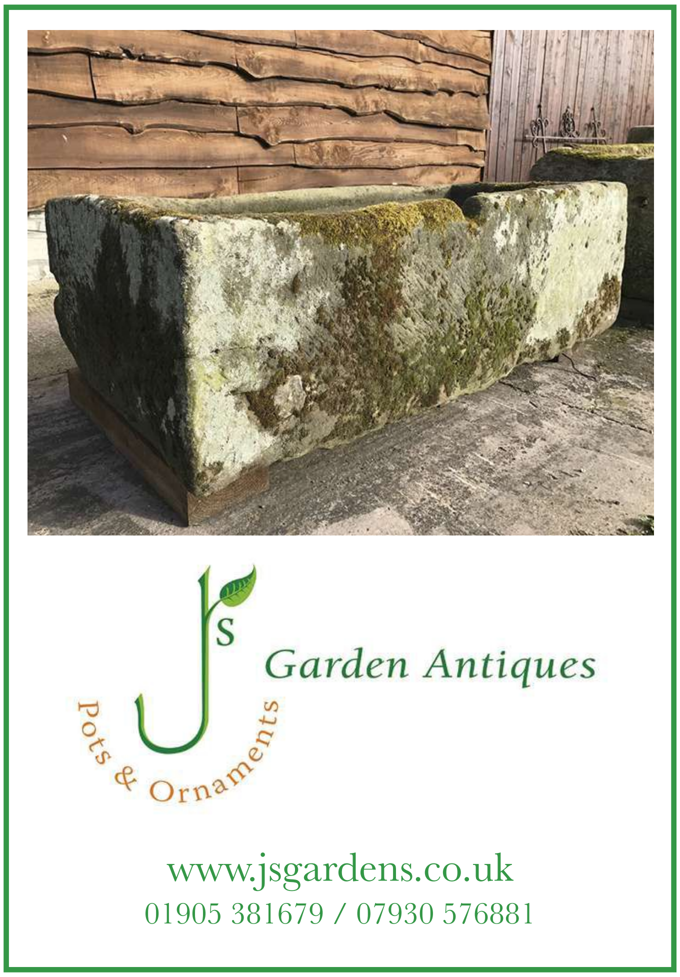
The revealing autobiography of the UK's very own master of modernism, covering a career that spans half a century.

Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden critic and regular columnist.

The back of this well-presented memoir by one of the elder statesmen of the British garden-design scene is emblazoned with the statement, 'The Man Who Made the Modern Garden'. Well, yes and no.

It was certainly true in the UK, where for almost a decade before the publication of his seminal *Room Outside* (1969), John Brookes had been making a splash with Chelsea show gardens and small-garden designs. The early Brookes look was fiercely geometric, with angular pools, black-painted pergolas and 'architectural' plantings. But the Californian Modernists – notably Garret Eckbo and Thomas Church – had been busy 'making the modern garden' for several years already. There were, however, some salient differences between the Brookes style and that of the Americans. As Brookes explains, his design system was based on the architectural concept of 'the grid', whereby the volumes of the garden are directly extrapolated from those of the house. Spatial design is paramount, while matters such as planting are relegated to the status of detail. Most garden-design courses taught today are still based on this grid principle – with mixed results, since the method tends to lead to competent yet often unoriginal designs.

Brookes's genre-busting work in the 1960s and 1970s will inevitably be the focus of future historical interest in the work, but the designer is understandably at pains to present his international career in the round, including the creation of his own garden at Denmans in West Sussex. This memoir is a fitting companion volume to Barbara Simms's 2007 monograph on Brookes.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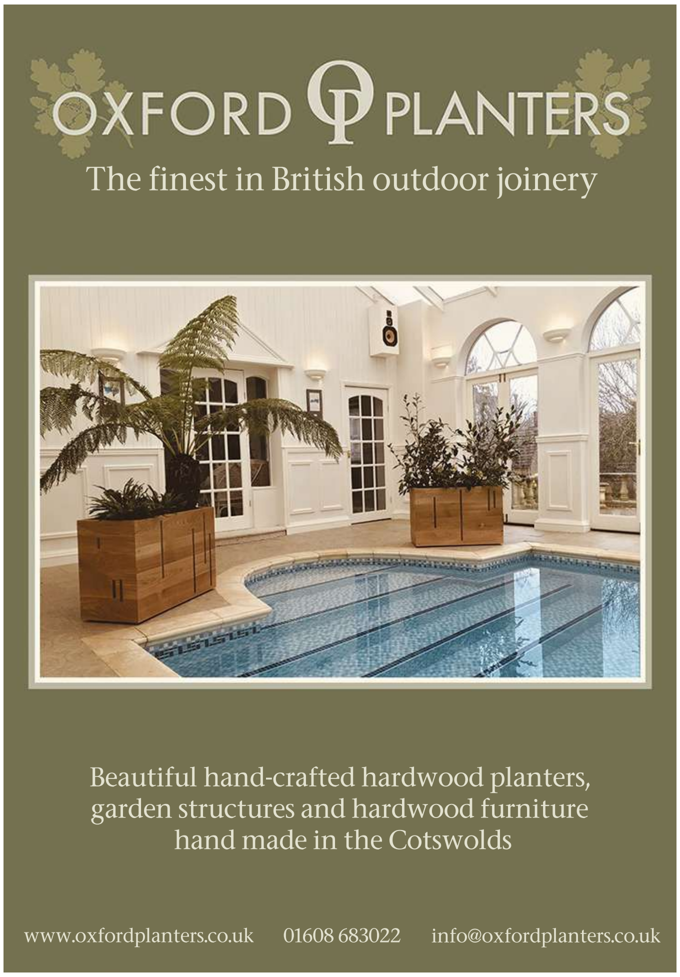
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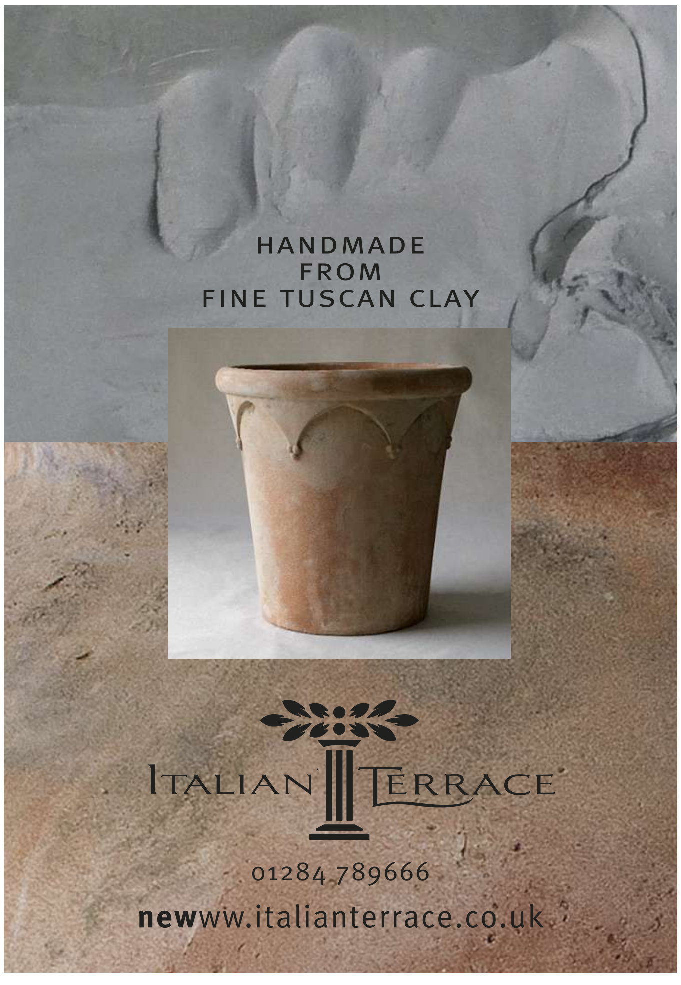
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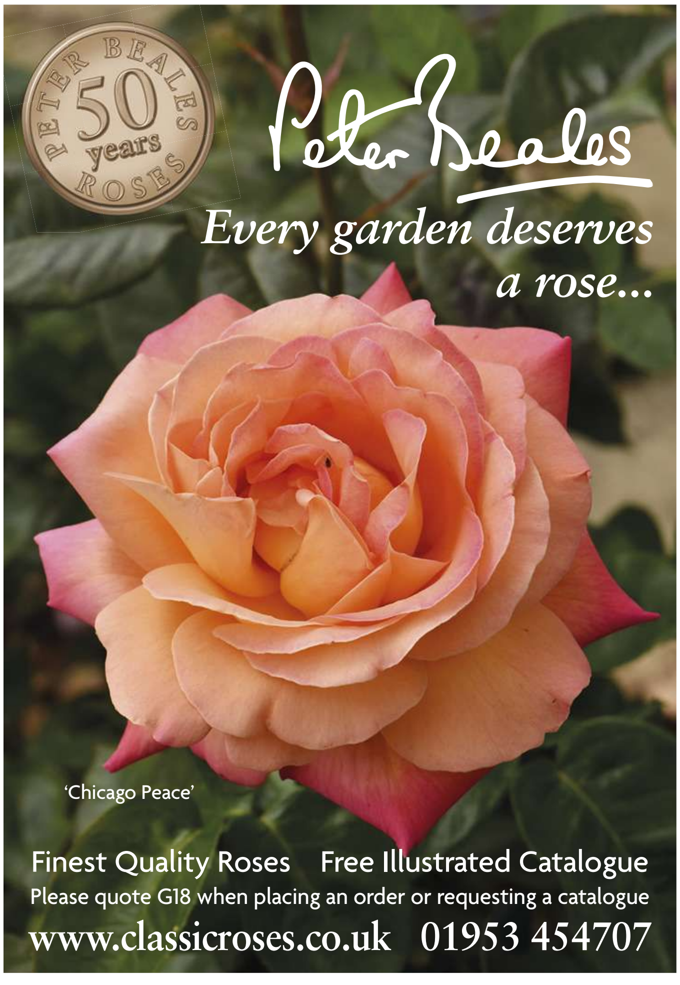
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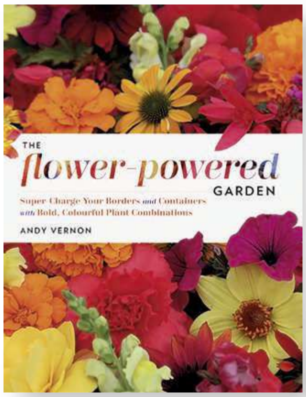
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THE FLOWER-POWERED GARDEN

by Andy Vernon

Timber Press, £22.99
ISBN 978-1604696660

As an alternative to most planting schemes the book champions floriferous bedding plants for their bright colours and ease of cultivation.

Reviewer John Hoyland is a plantsman and writer.

This book will strike a chord with the many gardeners who feel that contemporary gardens are now dominated by a planting style and a plant palette that has become, as Andy Vernon puts it, 'predictable, just a little too polite'. As an antidote, Vernon champions bedding plants that in the main are neglected, despised even, by many gardeners and designers, and which form what the book refers to as 'flower-powered seasonal displays'.

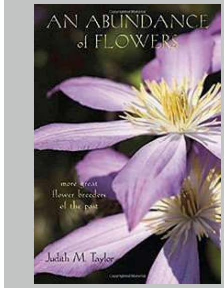
The book celebrates these plants as 'generous, easy-to-find, easy-to-grow and easy-to-please'. Vernon praises begonias, petunias, verbenas and the hundreds of other, mainly annual, plants for their floriferous qualities and their riotous colours.

Inspired by memories of his grandfather's colourful bedding plants and the glorious displays in local parks, Vernon suggests a dozen or so planting themes, mainly based around colour schemes, each with several pages of a sort of swatch card of plants and colours. His names for them, such as candy floss and sherbet spring, give an indication of the bold colours that appeal to him. Though lovers of pastel colours will also find ideas, and all are set out as recommendations rather than recipes, serving as springboards for the reader's imagination.

The book is to be read as an encouragement to gardeners to follow their instincts and plant whatever they want, not what is fashionable. I liked this book as much for the planting suggestions as for the breath of fresh air it blows over the discreet, well-mannered planting schemes of most modern gardens. Vernon's previous book helped rekindle our appreciation of dahlias. I hope that this one encourages more of us to shrug off our inhibitions and create more 'flower-powered gardens'.

Other books

The best of the rest, from city guides and houseplant advice to botanical history and practical garden design ideas.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Ohio University Press, £16.26
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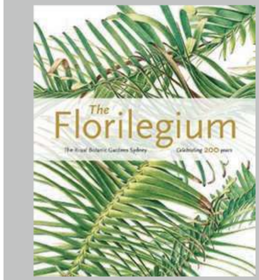
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THE FLORILEGIUM
by Colleen Morris and Louisa Murray
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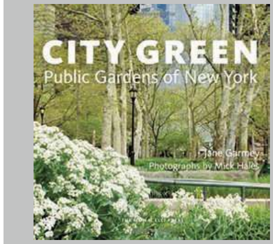
A beautifully produced book showcasing the botanical richness of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.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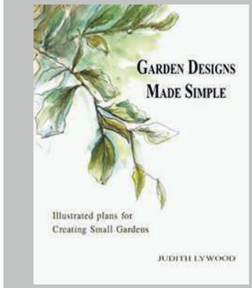
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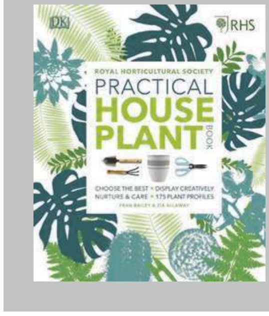
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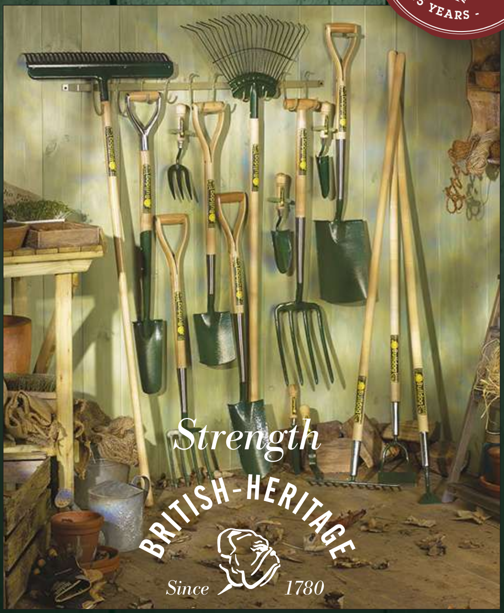

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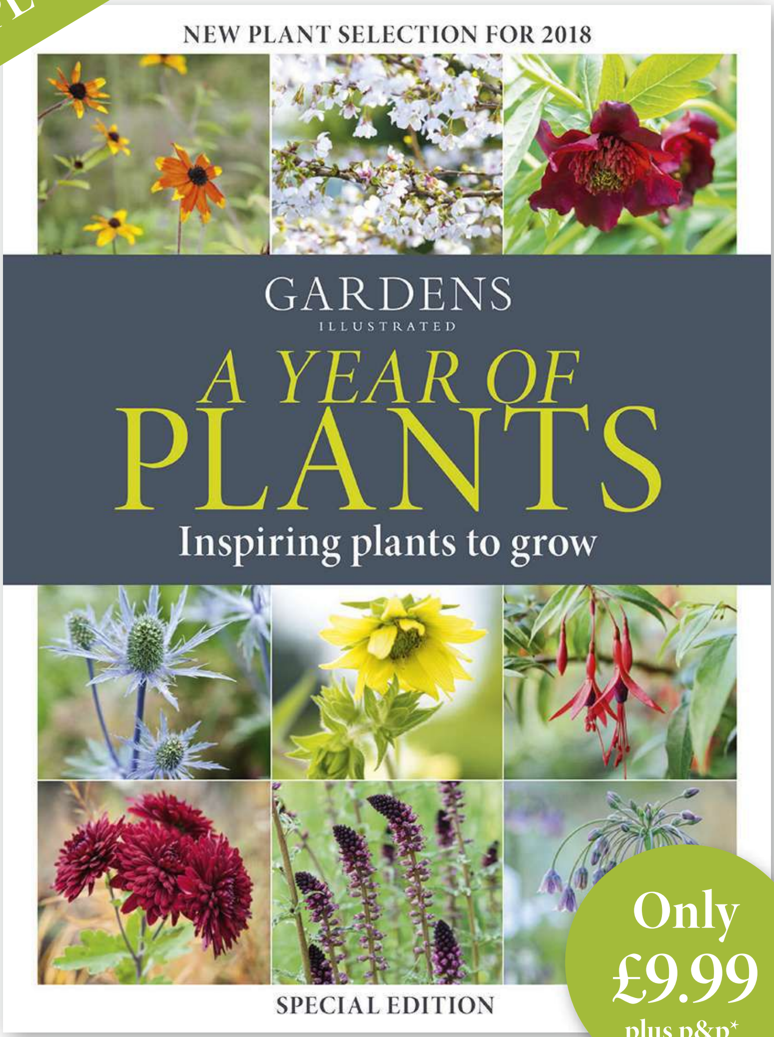
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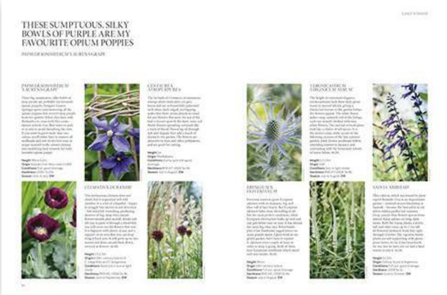
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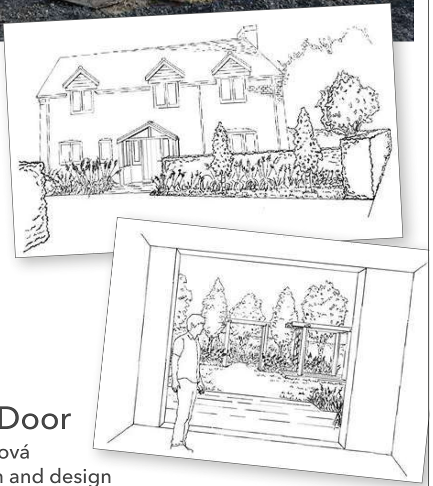

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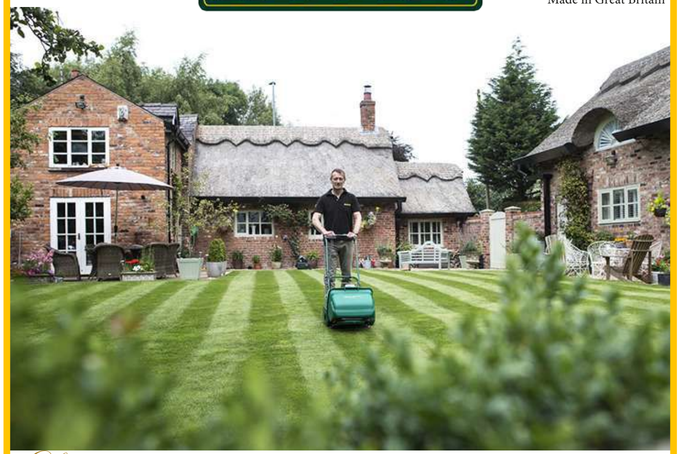

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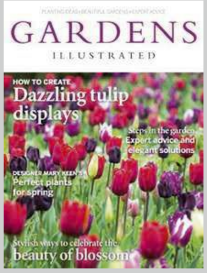
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ACROSS
1 See 26 across
4 Progressive death starting from tip of shoot (7)
9 Bulbous underground stem of eg crocus (4)
10 Laurel's partner resistant to cold (5)
11 It's a soil aerator, naturally! (4)
12 Alpine plant with trumpet-shaped blue flowers (7)
14 Green prune I cooked (6)
15 Genus of black bryony – in pot, a must (5)
16 Globe thistle genus – nice shop variety (8)
18 Would, we hear, hurry for grass-like plant in the *Luzula* genus (8)
20 Thick, spreading, like a shrub (5)
21 As roots steady a plant… on arch, perhaps (6)
23 "Red leaf-stalks", as stage actors may murmur (7)
25 Grass-like plant in *Poaceae* family – partly free-draining (4)
26/1 across Kew Garden's 18th-century Chinese-inspired building (5,6)
27 Glasgow pop singer's dwarf, clump-forming lupin (4)
28 Vigorous, dark-flowered lavender – which is restful in the afternoon (6)
29 Removes eg leaves from stems (6)

DOWN
1 Point of a garden fork? (5)
2 Resin exuded eg by leaves of *Cistus ladanifer* (3)
3 Showy tuberous plants, often stored over winter (7)
5 Non-climbing *Hedera* eg *H. helix* 'Erecta', and common pub name (3,4)
6 Looped knot of ribbons, er, makes a leafy garden shelter (5)
7 Common field plant, scarlet-flowered *Papaver rhoeas* (4,5)
8 Name of a pale-mauve clematis – resident at Highgrove! (6,7)
13 Damon returned a bumper-cropping dwarf French bean (5)
15 Like blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* – fruit-picking thus painless? (9)
17 The tupelo tree genus – in Tony's sandpit (5)
19 Erect like an iris's standard petals – honest! (7)
20 Dwarf rhododendron with grey-blue flowers and small garden bird (4,3)
22 Equivocate about a bushy boundary (5)
24 Swollen underground stems – they light up! (5)
27 Flower garland's partly edible, ideally (3)

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ACROSS 1 Laurel **5** Solidago **10** Arrow **11** Nose **12** Red Robin **14** Sieve **15** Florida **17** Daphnis **19** Thrift **21** Osmunda **24** Fossil **26** Reedmace **28/2** Love apple **29** Creep **30** Kerr **31** Lacecaps **32** Dimple.

DOWN 3 Rot **4** Leafbud **5/23** Spring greens **6** Lewisia **7** Dense **8** Gesneriad **13** Rarer **16** Lithodora **18** Haulm **20** Felicia **22** Seed pod **25** Swede **27/9** Coral spot **30** Kim.

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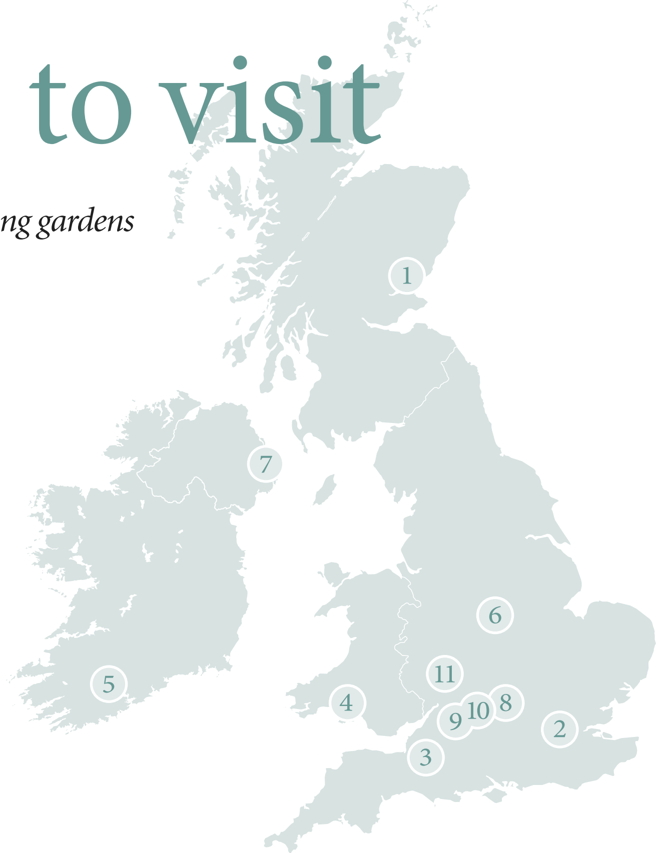
Spring gardens to visit

As spring approaches, make time to visit this collection of stunning gardens



1 GLAMIS CASTLE

Glamis Castle is the ancestral seat to the Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne, the setting for Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the childhood home of HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. Glamis Castle has witnessed 1,000 years of history in the heart of Angus. Glamis Castle reopens 30 March - 31 October.

Glamis, Angus, Scotland DD8 1RJ | glamis-castle.co.uk | 01307 840393

2 HAM HOUSE AND GARDEN

Tiptoe through the tulips at Ham House and Garden this April. Thousands of bulbs will be springing in to bloom throughout the garden. Walk among the flowers, including our tulip maze, and see a variety of period and more modern cultivars in a beautiful 17th-century setting.

Ham, Richmond, TW10 7RS | nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house-and-garden

3 THE BISHOP'S PALACE & GARDENS

Over 14 acres of spectacular RHS partner gardens including picturesque, romantic, formal and Victorian styles, a wildflower arboretum, specimen trees, alongside waterfalls, well pools, a moat with resident swans and a stunning medieval palace. Don't miss our Easter family activities from 24 March.

Wells, Somerset BA5 2PD | bishopspalace.org.uk | 01749 988111

4 ABERGLASNEY GARDENS

Aberglasney is one of Wales's finest gardens, a renowned plantsman's paradise in the beautiful Tywi Valley with a unique Elizabethan Cloister Garden at its heart. Explore more than ten acres of ancient gardens including formal walled gardens and woodland.

Llangathen, Carmarthenshire SA32 8QH | aberglasney.org | 01558 668998

5 BLARNEY CASTLE

Our 60 acres of gardens are a joy to explore. Visit the prehistoric Fern Garden, our deadly Poison Garden and our magical Rock Close. Make a wish on the famous wishing steps while the waterfall cascades alongside. Stroll by the lake and woodlands and see our magnificent collection of spring flowers in all their splendour.

Blarney, Cork, Ireland | blarneycastle.ie | +353 21 438 5252

6 CALKE ABBEY, NATIONAL TRUST

See Calke Abbey's walled gardens come alive with colourful displays of tulips, wallflowers and forget-me-nots, while the historic Orangery houses a variety of tropical and sub-tropical plants. The rare, surviving auricula theatre is a must-see, adorned with auriculas in April and seasonal highlights throughout the year.

calkeabbey@nationaltrust.org.uk | nationaltrust.org.uk/calke | 01332 863822

7 MOUNT STEWART HOUSE AND GARDENS

Mount Stewart is predominately a woodland garden and at this time of year, a delight. Lady Londonderry, who created the garden nearly 100 years ago suffered incurably from 'Rhododendronitis' and a walk in spring-time is enriched by these gorgeous plants. Magnolias, cherries, camellias and daphnes also delight.

nationaltrust.org.uk/mount-stewart

8 WATERPERRY GARDENS

Celebrate Spring at Waterperry Gardens with a visit to our fritillary meadow. See the county flower of Oxfordshire in all its native splendour as it flowers throughout April. Waterperry Gardens – a place to explore, relax and shop in beautiful surroundings all year round.

Near Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1LA | waterperrygardens.co.uk

9 CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

A very special and secret place, lying nestled behind walls and positioned close to the River Thames in London. Today the garden's features include Europe's oldest rockery, the Cool Fernery, the Garden of Edible and Useful Plants, and the Garden of Medicinal Plants. Walks, talks and workshops. Enjoy the cafe and shop.

chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

10 BUSCOT PARK

The gardens and pleasure grounds at Buscot Park are one of Oxfordshire's best kept secrets. Designed in the late 18th century the grounds were since considerably enhanced by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Lords Faringdon. They include the spectacular water garden designed by Harold Peto and the Four Seasons Walled Garden.

buscotpark.com | 01367 240932

11 SPETCHLEY PARK GARDENS

A garden for all tastes, Spetchley has a wondrous display of plants woven into a garden of 30 glorious acres. Visit one of the largest private collections of plant varieties outside the major botanical gardens, and enjoy the tempting tea room and plant sales. Don't miss the Specialist Plant Fair on Sunday 22 April 2018.

Spetchley, Worcester WR5 1RS | spetchleygardens.co.uk | 01905 345106

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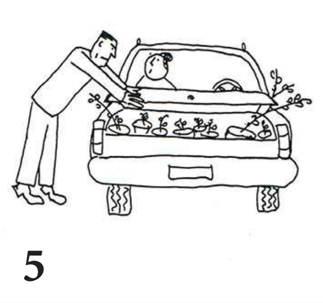
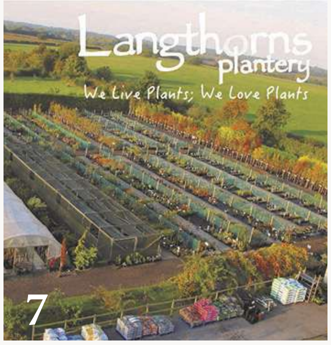
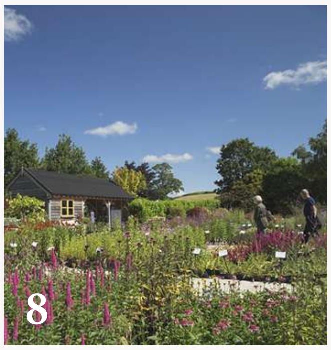
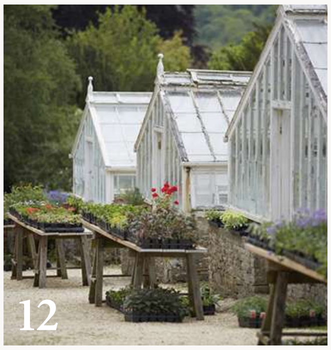
Nursery Collection









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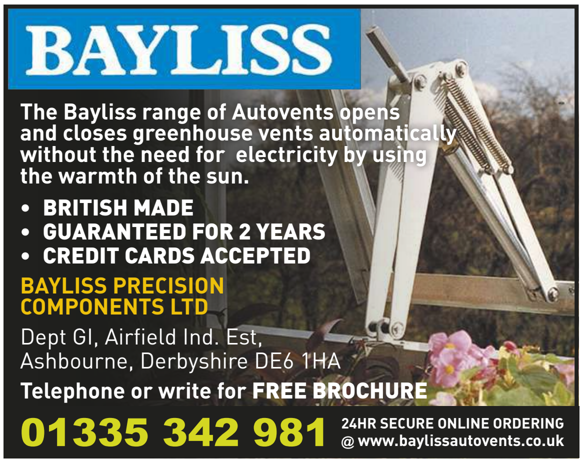

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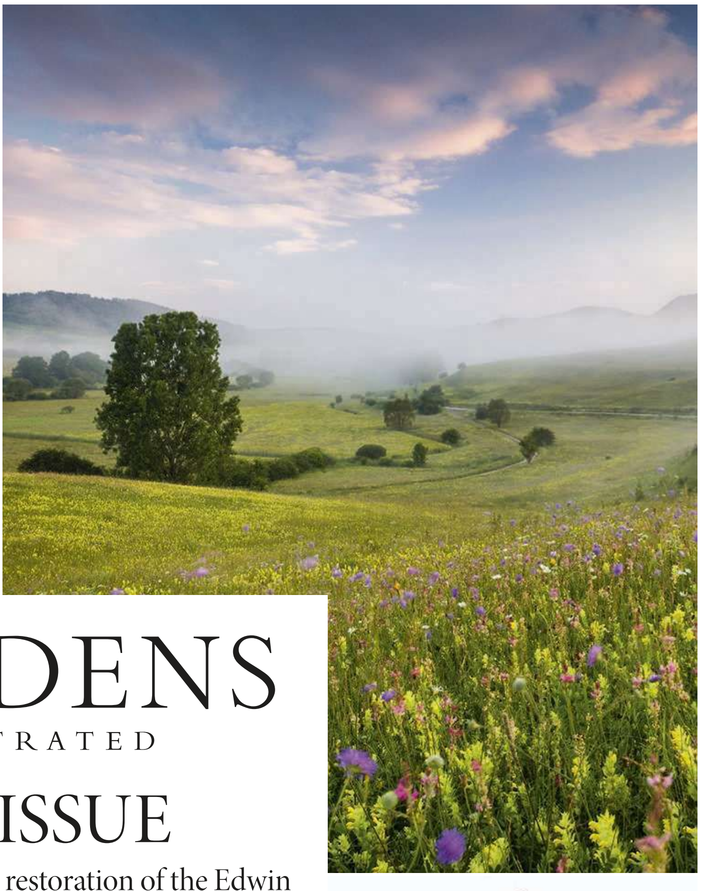

GARDENS
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MAY ISSUE

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- Romania's disappearing wildflower meadows
- Contemporary planting in a Suffolk garden
- In Margery Fish's footsteps at East Lambrook Manor
- What not to miss at the 2018 Chelsea Flower Show

JASON INGRAM, RICHARD BLOOM, PAUL DEBOIS / GAP PHOTOS

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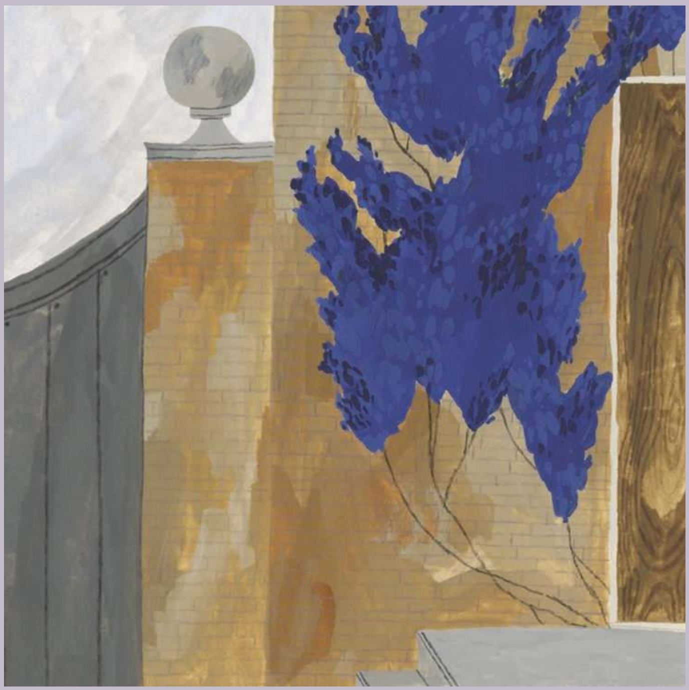
WRITER'S PLOT

SHORT AND SWEET

Shrubs are such dutiful anchor plants, it's all too easy to forget that they don't live forever. For those with short but brilliant lives, Frank has an insurance plan

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **RACHEL VICTORIA HILLIS**



I GIVE MY CEANOTHUSES TEN YEARS AND IF THEY MAKE IT TO FIFTEEN WOULD EXPECT A TELEGRAM FROM THE QUEEN

We like to think of the trees and shrubs in our gardens as permanent fixtures. We call them anchor plants and they are expected to remain, dutifully, holding the garden together. If we change our minds about one and, wondering what made us plant it in that spot to begin with, wish it dead, we tend to delay the execution, despairing of what to do with the awful gap it will leave. Fortunately, some things, by their tendency to a short and brilliant life, do the dirty work for us, and provide the lesson that it is good to move your anchors from time to time.

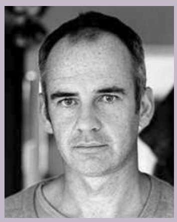
It is impossible to think that anyone has ever tired of their *Ceanothus* 'Puget Blue'. There are overwhelming specimens (if not of actual 'Puget Blue', something similar) in London squares, of a height and breadth that we provincials with our wind and frost could never dream of. I give my ceanothuses ten years and if they make it to fifteen would expect a telegram from the Queen.

But then, this not being California, it was always astonishing and delightful that they would condescend to remain with me for any length of time at all. When I did get to live in California it was a great disappointment to see how shabby and unremarkable the wild ceanothuses were compared to the hybrids we know in our gardens. And more devastating to discover, on a trip to the Puget Sound in Washington, that 'Puget Blue' doesn't like it there at all. We have the best of it, and you only have to remember to plant another ceanothus every few years to have one coming along, one in full fig and one on the way out. They will last longer with the drainage and heat of a wall, so long as you can give them elbow room – for a hard pruning is certain death – but look best, I think, freely standing and thoroughly staked in a border, where the electric mop of fireworks can have full effect.

The death of my first *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver' was a bitter blow. It was an early triumph in its border and I had been recommending it by default to anyone who asked for any kind of advice. Luckily, I have my own higher oracles to consult and they all assured me that that was what 'Quicksilver' did, and that it was as unpredictable as it was inevitable. More fortunate still I had been potting up some of the prodigiously produced suckers to give away.

Thought to be a hybrid of the old world *Elaeagnus angustifolia* and the new world *E. commutata*, but sometimes speculated otherwise, its chief joy comes from the flowers which you'll smell before you see them. The scent can fill the garden on a good day, leaving the uninitiated bewildered by the near invisibility of the flowers. The second glory is in the grace of the silver foliage, superior, in my opinion, to the more often lauded silver pear. The suckers give you plenty of scope to play with new locations. I have even put a few in the boundary hedge. The dryness and competition there may just encourage them to live a little longer.

Daphnes are more notorious for death than opera heroines. *Daphne bholua*, which began flowering soon after Christmas and is only just now finishing, has become indispensable to me. It is not so easy to propagate and has only recently become passably available. Still, whenever I see it for sale I tend to buy three, if they are good. Two are planted, of which one will probably expire soonish while the other thrives for the moment. The third is sentenced to a pot as back-up. By this strategy I can have two or three decent-sized plants in the garden at the same time, which is the minimum for decency. Other daphnes, if you can grow them, should have the same insurance premium paid. It may seem like attrition, but the scent is worth the price. □



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire.

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